

QUESTOR

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THE ULTIMATE ANIME MAGAZINE



Sidekicks take the Spotlight

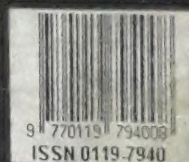
This issue:

It's Raining Cats and Dogs!

Exclusive:

**A Peak at Final Fantasy:
The Spirits Within**

THIEVES IN TIGHTS: CAT'S EYE



DAIMOS

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I have a confession to make. After *Escaflowne*, *Kenshin*, *Eva* and *Cowboy Bebop*, nothing much can hold my attention and interest anymore. *Boys Be?* Ho-hum! *Gatekeepers?* Ho-hummer! For me, the new series just don't offer enough, well, oomph! Everything else nowadays, either I have seen or know to have been done before. Nothing new, nothing surprising, nothing shocking. That's why when I was watching one of the series which are being aired locally, I caught myself falling asleep! Call it jaded, whatever, but I prefer to think that I'm animed-out at the moment. Who knows, someday this state'll change.

Now, I can't say the same for cats. (*Ayos ba sa segue?* ^_^) Cats have always fascinated me. The other day, I spent the better half of the afternoon watching one of my barely-three-month-old kittens picking a fight with our vile dog which was easily ten times bigger — and meaner — than it was. The little guy just got so annoyed with all the barking that it decided that the mitts were off. It stood up on its hind legs and started reaching, swiping and clawing at the darned dog's nose. To be fair, the dog didn't really get hurt (*siyempre!*). It was more surprised, maybe even amused, by all the hubris. But hey, at least it did take notice and stopped annoying the li'l kitty.

So...I like cats. They're mean b*tches and they pretty much don't give a damn about anything except maybe looking out for number one. They're cruel. Sometimes they catch mice not to eat them but only to play with them, a sadistic pleasure gained from making something lesser suffer. Like spoiled deities, you have to "earn" their affection and respect. I love the cruelty and the haughtiness!

As an homage to proud felines (okay, okay, and other furry critters out there), we've decided to dedicate this issue to them. We have features on Cat's Eye, those sexy cat burglars; Hello Kitty, easily the most recognizable cat in the world; an in-depth feature on anime animal guides and sidekicks and still more anime cats. Too much cats! It's raining cat and dogs!

Ganbarimasu!

Bambi-neko
Editor-in-Chief

Erratum:

Last month's Fight! article was contributed by Adrian Dy and not by Antonio Dy. Sorry for the mix up.

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Editor-in-Chief	BAMBI C. ELORIAGA バンビー エロリアガ
Managing Editor	JOHANN FREDERICK CABBAB ヨーハン フレデリック カババ
Lay-out Artist	ROMMEL RUANTO ロメル ルワント
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Contributors	DONG ALEJAR PAMELA ANG NICK BALLESTEROS CECIL ESTRADA LB GUERRERO TSUN LI JG NAVIDA THE NEKOMANCER ROBIN RIVERO
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Publisher	LARRY CHAN
Consultant	LEVI CASTILLO

Distribution	INT'L BRANDS REGENCY INC. SUITE 402 QUADSTAR BLDG., ORTIGAS AVE., SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA TEL.: (632) 744 5063 TELEFAX: (632) 726 5517
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SHROUDED IN MYTHS

by Maria Verona C. Eloriaga

Every country, every culture has its own set of myths and legends. Populated by imaginary and / or supernatural beings, it is no wonder that these traditional tales have provided a wellspring of ideas and inspiration for a lot of anime series.

Naturally, Japanese artists would look to their own folk legends for ideas but interestingly enough, stories from all around the world (or versions of them) have been adapted into animation. Here's a sampling of some of those myths and legends.

Japanese Myths

Tsukino Usagi (The rabbit on the moon)

You've heard of the man on the moon, right? Well the Japanese believe that there are rabbits on the moon. During the summer months, people on that side of the world can see what looks like rabbits on the surface of the moon. There are two of them, actually, each holding a pestle and pounding on mortars to make *mocchi*. Yup, *mocchi*. Not cheese.

As most of you know, Tsukino Usagi is also the name of Sailormoon and I'm sure everyone knows her story by now. Usagi is actually a princess from the moon, exiled (not by choice, though) to the Earth. Her weird-looking hair is an allusion to rabbit ears.

Another moon princess is Princess Moon (that sounded weird) from *Yaiba*. She is someone, er, some rabbit whose kingdom is on the moon, she is tended to by her rabbit retainers and she is soon awakened from her slumber to tend to the Earth.



Susanou and the Yamato no Orochi

Susanou is one of the children of Izanagi and Izanami (the two principal deities of Japan who gave birth to the Japanese islands) and is the younger brother of Amaterasu the sun goddess. Susanou was unruly and rash, refusing to govern the seas — the territory which was assigned to him.

Once, he threw a horse (some state horsehide, this is



probably more likely) into Amaterasu's room. Shaken, the sun goddess hid in a cave, plunging the world into darkness. Though the other gods eventually succeeded in drawing her out, they decided that enough was enough and they banished Susanou from the realm of the gods.

The rebel god found his way to the land of Izumo (the Shimane prefecture at present, it is known as the birthplace of most Japanese legends) where he encountered an old couple. The couple was in distress, they once had eight daughters. Now all but one remains, the rest have been eaten by the Yamato no Orochi, a dragon with eight heads and eight tails whose length is over eight mountains.

The Orochi was likely to make another appearance and the couple was afraid that they would lose Kushinada, their youngest daughter, to it as well. Susanou then made a bargain with the couple: he would vanquish the Orochi in exchange for Kushinada's hand in marriage. The couple agreed.

Susanou had eight jars of sake prepared and placed it in front of Kushinada's house. When the Orochi appeared, it noticed the jars and all eight heads dipped down to drink the liquor. It soon got drunk. Seeing this, Susanou came out of hiding brandishing his sword and did battle with the Orochi. Fierce as the Orochi was, the liquor made it tipsy and its heads were chopped off one by one by Susanou. With the Orochi dead, Susanou and Kushinada were soon married.

The Orochi seems to be a popular creature which appears in such anime like *Dark Myth* (if you ever wanted to learn about Japanese myths, this is the one for you) and once again, *Yaiba*. Princess Moon turned into the Yamato no Orochi near the end of the series. In the *Ranma 1/2* OAV, *An Akane to Remember*, the Orochi is just one of the weird creatures inhabiting a forest being tended to by Shinosuke and his grandfather. Ranma and company ultimately had to help "Shin-boy" in besting the Orochi and acquiring moss from its back. The moss is the cure to a fatal illness plaguing Shinosuke.

But perhaps no other series has brought the Orochi legend to life more effectively than Yuzo Takada's *Blue Seed*. The lead character Momiji and her sister Kaede are

directly descended from Kushinada's bloodline. They are destined to have power over (or to vanquish) creatures called *aragami* which possess the mysterious blue seeds. When the god Susanou reawakens, one of the sisters will be wedded to him in a ceremony which would prove vital to the fate of the world.

The Three Sacred Treasures

Continuing the story of Susanou and the Orochi, it is said that while the monster was being slain, from its belly fell the *magatama*, the sacred orb of life. The tear that trickled from the last head to be cut off became the sacred mirror. And as Susanou tried to cut off the Orochi's last tail, his sword hit something hard. Ripping the tail open, he discovered that within it was a sword, which would later be known as the *Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi* (sword of the gathering clouds of heaven).

Feeling that he was unworthy of possessing such a sword, Susanou presented it to his sister Amaterasu. She, in turn, passed it on — as well as the orb and the mirror — to her grandson. Amaterasu's grandson eventually came down from the heavens, his descendants would eventually become the first Japanese emperors. And the objects, now known as the three sacred treasures of Japan (symbols of the Japanese Imperial throne), are said to be preserved somewhere in the Imperial palace in Tokyo.

In the series *Yu Yu Hakusho* (*Ghostfighter*), Yusuke's first assignment was to go after three demons — Hiei, Kurama and Gouki — who had stolen the sacred treasures. Kurama had stolen the mirror, Gouki the orb and Hiei the sword. On the other hand, in *Sailormoon*, three of the outer *senshi* possessed one each of the treasures: Sailor Pluto had the orb, Sailor Neptune possessed the mirror and Sailor Uranus kept the sword.

In *Blue Seed* there are two rival characters named Kusanagi and Murakumo. Murakumo and Kusanagi actually refer to the same thing: the sword discovered by Susanou within the Orochi's tail. As stated above, the sword was once known as *Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi*. But it was later called *Kusanagi no Tsurugi* (grass cutting sword) after Emperor Yamato Takeru used it to cut an escape route through tall grass when he was surrounded by his enemies during the Ainu subjugation campaign.

Chinese Myths

The Seven Lucky Gods

The Japanese believe that there are seven gods — Ebisu, Daikokuten, Bishamonten, Benzaiten, Fukurokuju, Jurojin and Hotei — which bring good luck and happiness. These gods are actually of Chinese origin.

Rumiko Takahashi seems to be particularly fond of these seven guys. Early on in her career, they made an appearance in one of her short stories. Then they made a reappearance in *Ranma* movie 1, *Big Trouble in Nekonron China*, as the group Ranma had to go up against before facing off with Prince Kirin.

The Four Animal Gods

The ancients believed that the world is divided into four sectors each governed by an animal deity. Genbu the black turtle-snake hybrid rules the north, Byakko the white tiger governs the west, Seiryuu the blue dragon guards the west and Suzaku the red phoenix rules the south.

The four gods are a popular motif used in many anime



such as *Cowboy Bebop* in the episode Boogie Woogie Feng Shui. In *Yu Yu Hakusho*, the Urameshi team had to fight against four demons — Genbu, Byakko, Seiryuu and Suzaku — who had unleashed a swarm of insects that possessed people to do evil deeds.

Of course, to most otaku, if you speak of the four gods, the series that would readily come to mind would be *Fushigi Yugi*. In the series, best friends Miaka and Yui are transported to a world where the four gods are real. Once in a while, they even take on human forms and their powers can be harnessed by maidens called *miko* who are destined to be their bride, among other things.

Dog Warriors

The series *The Hakkenden* and *Shin Hakkenden* (see Anime Continuum for plot synopses of both series) introduced us to samurai dog warriors. The story is actually Chinese in origin. In the original epic, called *Chung I Shui Hu Ch'uan* (Riverside Traditions of Loyalists), there is a story which sort of falls on a similar vein. That is, princesses, dogs and princesses marrying dogs.

Japanese novelist Bakin Takizawa wanted to do his own version of the Chinese epic but he reduced the original 108 heroes to just eight. It took him thirty years to finish the novel, partly because of the story's unusually long length and partly because Bakin was gradually losing his eyesight. Near the end, his only recourse was to dictate the final parts to his daughter-in-law.

Journey to the West

What is perhaps the most used theme in anime is the story of the Monkey King. *Journey to the West* is actually based



on a true story about a monk named Zang Xuan who traveled to India on foot to seek the *Sutra*, the Buddhist Holy Book. The story of the Monkey King is actually an allegorical version of the monk's tale, the most definitive version of which was written by a scholar/official named Ch'eng-wu and was published in 1592.

The story of Journey to the West can be divided into three parts: the origin of the Monkey King, an account of the hero Tripitaka's life before he sets out to retrieve the Sutras from the Western heavens, and the actual journey of Tripitaka with his spirit guides Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy.

The Monkey King story has influenced such series as *Monkey Magic*, *Alakazam the Great* and *Saiyuki*. Of course, the most popular among the Monkey King "clones" would be Gokou from *Dragonball* with his monkey tail, kintun cloud and stretch stick. It is said that the Monkey King travels on clouds and he also stole a precious treasure from the underwater kingdom — an iron bar that served as a ballast for the seas, it can lengthen or shrink at the owner's command.

The Golem, a Jewish Myth

A golem is a figure made out of clay that is given life through a magical formula — actually the name of God which is written on its forehead or on a parchment which is placed in its mouth. Once awakened, the golem then becomes the slave of the one who had breathed life into it. However, there comes a time when the golem becomes too sentient and will rebel against its master, it then becomes destructive and is a danger to those around it. When that time comes, it must be returned to the dust from whence it came. This is done either by removing the parchment from its mouth or erasing the name of God from its

forehead. Of course, this is easier said than done.

Several scholars have the opinion that the story of Frankenstein's monster is actually based on the golem legend. The monster, like a golem, is an automaton which eventually turned on its creator. The boomers of *Bubblegum Crisis Tokyo 2040* are likewise based on golems. Although they quietly served the population for a time, they eventually went berserk and turned against their human masters.

On the other hand, Naga the Serpent of *The Slayers* seems particularly fond of conjuring golems to answer her commands. Victor von Gerdenheim, the Frankenstein looking fighter from the *Darkstalkers* anime and video game, has been referred to as a golem together with his sister Emily.

European Myths

Atlantis

The most specific references to the lost civilization of Atlantis exist in Plato's dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias*. According to these accounts, there once was an island-nation situated in the Atlantic that was populated by a proud and noble race which was directly descended from the sea god Poseidon. Their culture and technology was far more advanced than those of other nations. The people of Atlantis possessed great wealth, thanks largely to the land's ample natural resources. For a time, the people led simple but satisfied lives. However, this changed when the people became greedy, corrupted and lusted for more power. Zeus the king of the gods took notice of the Atlantean's excessiveness and immorality and in one fell swoop, he caused the seas to swallow the island-nation.

In the anime *Nadia and the Secret of Blue Water*, the main character Nadia is of Atlantean origin and she and her friends are vying against mysterious forces to be the first to unlock the mysteries of Atlantis.



Similarly, in the *Vision of Escaflowne*, the Atlanteans are an advanced race who had discovered how to harness the power of wishes. During the final moments when their nation was falling into ruin, all their hopes and desires gave birth to the magical world of Gaea. The main character Van is a *ryuginbito*, part of the dragon clan whose ancestors were Atlanteans.

Vampires: For the Blood is the Life

Since Sheridan le Fanu's *Carmilla*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, pulp books entitled *Varney the Vampire* (nope, he's not purple in color) and most recently Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*, a lot has been said and written about the Vampire myth. The boob tube, comics and the silver screen have all also paid homage to these romantic creatures of the night with *Blade*, *Vampirella*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*. Anime and video game series like *Master of Mosquiton*, *Bastard!*, *Akazukin Cha Cha*, *Nightwalker* and *Darkstalkers* are also not spared. But what do we really know about vampires?

We're familiar with the fangs, the blood drinking, the effect of direct sunlight, the absence of reflections in mirrors, flight, the ability to turn into bats, rats and wolves, the superhuman strength, and of course the ability to charm, persuade and seduce. We know that the victim dies when bitten and the vampire drinks too much. When a little of the vampire's own blood is given to the prey, he or she too becomes undead.

Wooden stakes through the heart and decapitation kills the vampire. Some say silver bullets do the trick (others say this only works on werewolves). Garlic seems to be a deterrent (hey, eat one whole clove without brushing your teeth and a lot of people will stay away from you too). Crucifixes and holy water sometimes also do the trick.

What do you do when a vampire is after you? Scatter seeds in his path, he will have to stop and pick each one up (I knew that fact even before I heard of an *X-files* episode that tackled this). Seems vampires are very anal creatures obsessed with order and cleanliness. How do you find a vampire? Get either an innocent young boy or a pure maiden and sit him/her atop a pure white or pure black horse which hasn't stumbled since birth. Let them loose in a graveyard and wherever tomb the horse stops and stomps, that is the vampire's grave.

— contributed by Igor Cabbab

Indian Myths

India has always been known for its mystique, largely due to its culture, history and religion. Anime has not been far behind in exploring this enigma.

RG Veda (pronounced rig veida) is a story full of mystery, action, drama, love and tribulations. *Rg Veda* was Clamp's first contribution to the world of manga and anime. It is loosely based on *Rig Veda*, a sacred Hindu writing that tells of the lives of and battles between gods. Even the names of the main characters are Japanese translations of the Sanskrit names of gods.

RG Veda takes place in the Tenkai or heavenly world, which used to be peaceful under the rule of Tentei the Emperor. However, Taishaku-ten, one of Tentei's warriors, rebelled against his lord and defeated the strongest warrior of the land, Ashura-Ou, who was also the Guardian God of War. Taishaku-ten

then killed the Tentei and took the crown for himself. This event was called the Holy War, which began the dark reign of Taishaku-ten. Fast forward to 300 years later where the main story begins. An old stargazer found a prophecy that foretold the defeat of the evil Emperor. Six people known as the Six Stars would gather and bring about his demise. Enter Ashura and Yasha, only survivors of their respective clans. They have embarked on a journey that would bring to past what was foreseen.

Shulato tells the story of two best friends who were transported by Vishnu, the Hindu goddess of harmony, to the Heavenly Plane. There is trouble brewing in the peaceful land and Shulato, the reincarnation of Shulao Shulato, a warrior of the gods, is one of its prophesized saviors. But even goddesses can make mistakes. Vishnu did not see the treachery of Indra and his lust for power. He had already turned Gai, Shulato's friend into an evil warrior. Right after Shulato arrived, he turned the goddess into stone and laid the blame on Shulato, who was transported away from the Heavenly Palace before he was killed by the other warriors. Now, Shulato must fight his way back to the Palace to help Vishnu and expose Indra for the traitor that he really was.

Unlike *Rg Veda*, the characters of *Shulato* take their names literally from the Hindu gods and warriors. One example is the goddess Vishnu. Although in Indian mythology Vishnu is male, it is still stated that he shares equal power with the god Shiva. She is the deity of the preservation of life while Shiva holds over its destruction. Asura, the enemy battalion that Vishnu feared, is the name of a race of demons in Indian mythology that uses ingenious black arts. Indra is the Hindu god of thunder.

— contributed by Cecil Estrada

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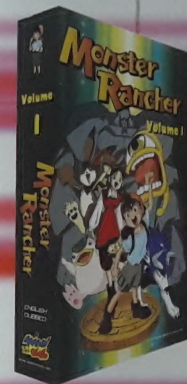
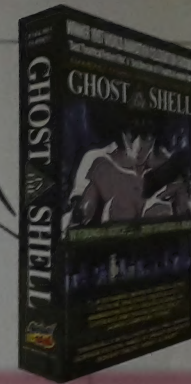
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Hey there, Kitty Pie!

by Robin C. Rivera

She's turning 27 this year but Hello Kitty is looking anything but old. After a major design and marketing overhaul that began in the 90s, Hello Kitty or Kitty-chan as her Japanese fans call her not only remains very popular with kids worldwide, but has now caught the fancy of teeners and even young women in their 20s and 30s. Prior to 1995, Sanrio, the retail company that created Hello Kitty, had been experiencing a slump in sales due in part to Japan's economic recession. Then in 1995, Hello Kitty's present designer, **Yuko Yamaguchi**, decided to give the beribboned white cat a more updated look: her bow was replaced with a flower. It was the beginning of a licensing blitz aimed at making Kitty more appealing to older collectors, namely Kitty fans who had by then grown up. Sanrio called them 'Kittylers' or 'The First Sanrio Generation'. The plan was to make Hello Kitty look like a designer logo. Not only did she show up on a whole new line of apparel (which included tasteful lingerie), soon Kitty was also seen on household appliances, credit cards, cell phones and even electric guitars. She hit the streets too in Yamaha Motors' Hello Kitty Scooter and Daihatsu's limited edition Hello Kitty Car. The car had Kitty stamped all over the upholstery and had a Kitty-shaped speedometer. Here in the Philippines, Hello Kitty and a host of other Sanrio characters have always been a favorite, thanks to their expo-

sure in numerous Gift Gate shops. Gift Gate is the exclusive distributor and licensee of everything Sanrio in this country.

Gift Gate's president, Virginia Ramos, first brought Sanrio to the Philippines in 1976 after discovering the brand during a family trip to Tokyo. Hordes of little Filipino girls were instantly drawn to the impossibly cute stationery, toys and school supplies that featured not only Hello Kitty but also Little Twin Stars, My Melody and later, Tuxedo Sam. Sanrio items became status symbols in schools where classmates would often ask each other, "May Sanrio ka ba?"

For Hello Kitty's 25th birthday in 1999, Gift Gate threw a big bash and fashion show at Club Fun in Glorietta. Seven hip young designers gave Kitty a millennium look. Seven hundred of Kitty fans came to party. Then in November last year, the very first Hello Kitty Café in the country opened in SM Megamall. Branches in Rockwell, Shangri-la Mall and SM City North EDSA are expected to open soon.

To make sure Kitty-mania will remain alive and purring, Sanrio will continue to produce 500 new products each month with Kitty as the permanent main attraction. The company is also actively promoting its video and multimedia line.

It's this incredible combo of volume and variety of products that has kept Sanrio going since the company set up shop in 1960. Then, of course, there's also that unmatched cuteness factor. That's something Hello Kitty, as one of Sanrio's earliest characters as well as its first big hit, had mastered from the start.

"Daisuki! Hello Kitty" and Other Kitty-Sightings on Video and TV

Yes, there is such a thing as Hello Kitty anime. **Daisuki! Hello Kitty** (Love! Hello Kitty) was made for pre-schoolers and showed Kitty and her sister Mimmy in a series of feel-good adventures. Seiyuu included **Megumi Hayashibara** (Rei Ayanami in *Evangelion* and Pai in *3x3 Eyes*) as Kitty and **Ikue Otani** (Merle in *Vision of Escaflowne* and Pikachu in *Pokémon*) as Pochi. There was also an English-language animated series called **Furry Tale Theater**, starring Kitty, My Melody, Tuxedo Sam and Chip. Every episode, they portrayed characters in fairy tales and other famous stories. They were always the good guys, though; the villains Catnip and Grinder are not Sanrio characters. *Furry Tale Theater* was aired in the US in 1987 and was also shown locally but this writer, for the life of her, cannot remember when. Episodes of the series have recently been re-released on video. Visit your nearest video store and check out *The Wizard of Paws* or *Kitty and the Beast*. Four English-language Hello Kitty movies *Cinderella*, *Mom Loves Me After All*, *Santa's Missing Hat* and *The Dream Thief* featuring Kitty and her family have also been made available on video. Currently, they can only be ordered online.

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The Kitty Coterie

Sanrio has more than a hundred characters in its present roster and each one has its own story. What we have here is a short list of the characters Filipino fans are most likely to be familiar with. For bios and trivia on the other characters, check out www.sanrio.co.jp

Hello Kitty

Born on November 1, 1974 in Suburban London, England, Kitty first appeared in a sitting pose on a small plastic wallet in 1975. She has a twin sister named Mimmy, parents named George and Mary White and grandparents named Anthony and Margaret White. They all live together in a house with a red roof. Kitty weighs only as much as three red apples and her favorite dish is her Mama's apple pie. She doesn't seem to have a mouth, though. She doesn't need one, according to Sanrio. "Hello Kitty is our ambassador to the world," explained a spokesman, "she speaks from the heart."

My Melody

She looks like a white bunny and she always wears the red hood made especially for her by her grandmother. Melody first came out of a forest in Mari Land on January 18, 1975 and she loves to eat almond pound cake.

Little Twin Stars

Like Melody, they came to the world in 1975 but their birthday is on December 24. Kiki (the blue-haired boy) and Lala (the pink-haired girl) were born to an inventor father and a poet mother on Compassion Planet faraway in the Dream Galaxy. Kiki sometimes travels on a cloud while Lala waves her wand and floats in the air.

Tuxedo Sam

To think of bow ties is to think of Tuxedo Sam. This rolly-polly penguin has a collection of 365 bow ties. Born on May 12, 1978 in the South Pole, Tuxedo Sam speaks fluent English apart from his native Penguinese.

Keroppi

Real name: Hasunoue Keroppi (Keroppi on the Lily Pad). He lives with his family in the Kerokero House near Donut Pond, a round pond with a little island in its center. He's been around since July 10, 1987. Keroppi's girlfriend's name is Keroleen.

Pochacco

Scatter-brained puppy Pochacco was born on a leap year, February 29, 1989. He likes walking on his hind legs but sometimes trips on his paws. He's a vegetarian and really, really, really loves to eat banana ice-cream.

Badtz-Maru

Here's a penguin with an attitude — a baaaaaaad attitude. He likes to pick on those around him and play practical jokes, maybe because he was born on April Fools' in 1993. Unlike other penguins, Badtz-Maru was born on the warm island of Oahu in Hawaii. He keeps a pet alligator named Pochi.





Asu no Egao no Tame ni Gatekeepers Opening Song

Sung by Yumi Matsuzawa

asu no egao no tame ni

chikara to chikara butsu kare ba are sori wa
hajimaru
tatakau kotoga yuuki to omoa naikedo
mamoritai yo kimi no sono egao

asu e no GEETO ienai keredo
dare ni demo aru yo (let's open the gate)

* ki no ono namida wa kitto muta janai
araso ni no ai mirai wa ano tobira no mukou gawa
mune no oku futaku jitto shimai konda
kagi wo takaku ka kage de namida sou
asu no egao no tame ni

kokoro to kokoro fure aeba yuujou gaumare ru
dareka no tame ni inochi mo hoshiku wa naito
kizuuta toki kimi wa tsuyoku naru

asu e no GEETO hirakeba kimi mo
bokura no nakaba sa (let's open the gate)

kyou kara no chikai zutto shinjitai
itsuwari no nai sekai wa mou tobira no mukou gawa
ouzora ni takeku yume wo no se habataku
shiroi hato wo oyukake tobidato wo
asu no egao no tame ni

shizuku yuugu ueteru sono hitomi
bokutachi ga ikiteru akashi sa

* repeat

Kyoukara Ashita he Gatekeepers Ending Song

Sung by Yumi Matsuzawa

Itsumade mo wasurenai
Takusan no mono moratta ne
Sora no iro utsushite hikaru
aoi houseki ya

koi no tachi hane mawaru
hiroi ni wa ja nai
motto motto daijina mono wo

Kinou kara kyou he
Kyou kara asu he to
Boku-tachi wa aruite yuku yo

Yuuyake no sakamichi de
Kataguruma shite moratta ne
Warui koto shikarezu ni tada
Kanashii me wo shita

Tooi hibi utsusu kamera
Dare no kokoro ni mo
Kitto kitto aru hazu dakara

Hitomi toji meguru
Arubamu no kazu dake
Boku-tachi wa otona ni naru yo

Tsunaideku kizuna
Hitori tara futari ne
Deto te wo kasane ai
Ato kara kuru kimi ni
Onaji mono wa dashitai kara

Kinou kara kyou he
Kyou kara asu he to
Boku-tachi wa aruite yuku yo

Kinou kara kyou he
Kyou kara asu he to
Boku-tachi wa aruite yuku yo

Source:
Anime Lyrics (.com). <http://www.AnimeLyrics.com>
anime/



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kalayaan, pagkakaibigan at dangal.
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ang mga anime sa abot ng aking makakaya.
Ipaglalaban ko ang aking karapatang manood

at mag-enjoy ng magagandang anime.
Ipagpapatuloy ko ang mga adhikain ng Anime Assault
upang patuloy na maghari sa telebisyon ang anime.
Hindi ako aatras at ibibigay ko ang aking
isang daang porsyento sa labang ito.
Sisikapin kong maging isang tunay
na mamamayan ng Anime Nation...
sa isip, sa salita at sa gawa.

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Coming Out Of The Sidelines

by Cecil Estrada

Additional art by Aldin Viray

(A Look at Animal Anime Sidekicks and Guides)

If you've been a good *Questor* fan, you must be familiar by now with Ryo-ohki, the cabbit that turns into a spaceship. You've probably gotten over the shock of learning that Mokona, the rabbit-like creature, is God. And Pu? It's a mutant penguin who loves to perch on Eugene's head and turns into some gigantic blue bird. Big deal. That's all said and done, so why don't we get on with the other cute critters and, erm, sidekicks/guides that abound in anime and put the spotlight on some of them, barring those mons who have already been featured countless other times of course.

Merle (*Tenkū no Escaflowne*). A furry, humanoid catgirl who happens to be Van's best friend since they were kids. She's the only one who knew about Van's wings before he began showing it to other people. She's extremely loyal and jealous when it comes to her "Van-sama". She hates Hitomi because she views the girl as a big rival. But when Van realized that he loved Hitomi, Merle was the one who encouraged him to go and seek her out. Ever heard of the saying "if you love somebody set them free, if they come back to you, it's meant to be"? Well, it didn't happen to her, although some Merle fans would beg to differ.



Naria and Helia (*Tenkū no Escaflowne*). Just like Merle, they are feline in appearance and just as loyal to their "friends". Although they are twin sisters, they would fight each other for just the tiniest chance of being with their Folken-sama. They even willingly gave up their lives for his cause. *sniff* *sniff* But at least they got to be with him in the end.

Moleman (*Tenkū no Escaflowne*). He may be a low-down thief and coward but he sure comes out at the right place and the right time (literally). He's really old and wise deep down as shown in some episodes.

Oolong (*DBZ*). He looks like a pig, acts like a pig (the pervert!), eats like a pig and squeals like one. He's a big insult to all other pigs in anime who exist to help the world. He has the ability to transform into anything or anyone but he usually uses his power to steal panties. The pig!



Puar (DBZ). A blue cat that hovers over Yamcha most of the time, giving him advice or a lecture. It can change into anything— and I mean anyTHING! —in a pop but it doesn't steal panties.

Shenlon and Porunga (DBZ). Dragons both, they appear when all seven dragon balls of planets Earth and/or Namek are collected at one place. They can grant any wish, even bring back the dead (except when the person has died three times already). Both dragons' powers cannot extend to stopping an enemy from attacking. If they were that powerful then those Saiyajins would be out of work, right?

Keroberos (*Card Captor Sakura*). Kero-chan is the guardian of the Clow Book and when the cards were lost, he became powerless. To recover the cards, he became Sakura's guide and teacher. He usually looks like a small mutant lion, acts like a stuffed toy in public and loves to eat, especially *takoyaki*. He also has a habit of reviewing the clothes Sakura wears in every episode. Talk about weird taste, he actually likes them!



Totoro (*My Neighbor Totoro*). A Totoro is a forest spirit that looks...like nothing anyone has ever seen. The biggest of its kind is as fat as Genma when in panda form and just as big but reminds one of a cat standing on two feet. Only children can see them and two sisters have a great adventure when they befriend not one but three Totoros.



Pen Pen (*Neon Genesis Evangelion*). When the Second Impact obliterated Antarctica, its survivors mutated to cope with the change. Penguins, for example, evolved and began to love heat. Pen Pen is one of these survivors. Currently residing at Major Misato Katsuragi's place as the official pet of the house, Pen Pen loves to swim in hot springs, eat fish, drink beer and sleep in its little corner in Misato's apartment. No one bothers him when he's in a bad mood or else...

Tama (*Fushigi Yugi*). Not to be confused with Tamahome, Tama — also known as Tama-chan or Tama-neko — is a cat. Tama first "owned" Mitsukake, then Miaka and soon, all the seishi. But it usually chooses Mitsukake's or Chichiri's shoulder as a napping spot. Tama happens to be *the* most important character in FY. Why? If it hadn't been for its feline sixth sense, the seishi and Miaka would have died several times over! And where else can you find a cat that can re-enact "Miaka's in trouble again!" as well as it can?



Luna (Sailormoon) Back to basics. See Sailormoon and watch that voluble little black cat try (HARD!) to get some sense into Usagi in almost each and every episode. If it wasn't for Luna, there wouldn't be a Sailormoon in the first place; the crescent moon tattoo on her forehead was the reason Sailormoon came into being. In the manga, she turns into a woman with black hair and a bad taste in clothes. Hmmm, a tiny thought...if Luna hadn't awakened Sailormoon then...no Sailormoon...KILL THAT CAT! (Ed's note: Shhh! We have a lot of Sailorfans out there, ^_^)



Artemis (Sailormoon). Luna's partner in feline grumbling and hardships. He is Minako's pet and like Luna, he constantly fights a losing battle of getting some sense into Minako's head. Of course, his sarcastic comments sometimes gets SOME results. In the manga, he turns into a tall guy with white hair and an even worse taste in clothes.

Diana (Sailormoon). Daughter of Luna and Artemis from the future, pet of Chibiusa, sometimes pink, sometimes gray. Also turns into a human. Same problem as parents. 'Nuff said.

Kyaa (Please Save My Earth). In Japan, people exclaim "Kyaa!" whenever they are startled or scared (except Kenshin, of course ^_^). And this is just what people shout whenever they meet this gigantic kitten with a preference for sunglasses. So it was decided that Kyaa was the perfect name for it. It was the only friend young Shion ever had and they would usually take naps together providing warmth for each other.

Ura (El Hazard). A mutant talking cat who doubles as an armor and coat besides being a royal pet. Ura attaches itself to Makoto when its real owner is kidnapped. It provides its ser-

vices well and even manages to become a source of reason (especially to its highly paranoid owner) and guide to the ragtag team and to bring back its original owner.

Ede (Cowboy Bebop). A highly intelligent Welsh corgi. This dog was born and raised in a laboratory



tory and was frequently put under experiments thus resulting in his above-average dog IQ. Faye hates him, Spike tolerates him, Jet has no problems with him and Ed loves him. He can usually be found in the Bebop sitting near his dog dish. **Pigu and Mogu (Fancy Lala).** Dragons both (again), they were transformed into smaller, cuter versions of themselves via the magic of Fushigi-san. They attached themselves to Miho (literally by clamping onto her shoulders) and pretended to be stuffed toys until Miho tricked them into talking. They soon became Lala's advisers, friends, conscience and cause of headaches. Pigu sports blue ears and ridges while Mogu has pink ones. They usually change into small accessories like bracelets when in public. Their number one advice to Miho when in doubt: why don't you use your magic and become Lala?

Voluble Cecil Estrada is furry and has a bad taste in clothes.

Reference

DBZ. www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Towers/8583/dbz.html
<http://niko-niko.net/bebop/edein.html>

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WE ARE WOMEN, HEAR US PURR!

by Maria Vorobci C. Ekriaga

Sirens blare. Searchlights are lit. Just in time to illuminate three lithe figures...young women clad in leotards making off with a fortune in stolen artwork. The police are in hot pursuit but getting caught is clearly not an option for them. They aren't your ordinary, run-of-the-mill cat burglars. They're Cat's Eye!

Her Story

Cat's Eye was created by Hojo Tsukasa, the same dude who made *City Hunter*. The manga was first published in *Shounen Jump* in 1981. Eighteen collected volumes soon followed, running from 1981 to 1984.

Tokyo Movie Shinsha (TMS) and Nippon Television took an interest in Tsukasa's work and in 1983, *Cat's Eye* the anime premiered on Japanese television. The show lasted for two seasons, the first one had 36 episodes and the other had 37.

However, there are significant differences between seasons one and two. The first season was more faithful in following the manga's plot. The second one diverged a bit and character development wasn't pretty significant. Although, for the second season, they brought in a new director and character designer and this resulted into a more dynamic animation style that had a more anime look (read: the characters now had bigger eyes) and feel to it.

Cat Story

Rui (Namie in the local dubs), Hitomi and Ai (Love in the local dubs) Kisugi are sisters who own and manage the Cat's Eye Café. Unbeknownst to most, the pretty trio leads a double life. While they play cheery coffee shop proprietresses by day, by night, they prowl the city streets clad in stretchy leotards.





tion. In fact, their main customers are Toshio and the rest of the police force. Why they can't put two and two together escapes me. But the presence of one too many cops doesn't bother the sisters any (after all, almost all of them are as clueless as Toshio). Little do these cops know that even if they talk about cases within what they think is the "safe" confines of their station, all Rui has to do is peek through the windows and read their lips!

Indeed, for the police force, the Cat's Eye case is an endless game of cat and mouse.

Cat's Eye Cast

Rui Kisugi. The eldest of the three. She manages the Cat's Eye Café and is the brains of the group. She plans most of their capers.

Hitomi Kisugi. The middle sister. Hitomi is very athletic and as such, has become the team's designated muscleman, doing most of the physical work. Being Toshio's girlfriend, fooling her beau to work out a caper almost always leaves her distressed.

Ai Kisugi. The youngest in the family. Ai is a high school student who has knowledge in computers and machines. The special tools that the girls use in their burglaries are hand made by Ai herself.

Toshio Utsumi. He is a police detective who has sworn to one day catch and apprehend the members of the dreaded Cat's Eye gang. Unknown to him, however, one of the members of the gang is actually his girlfriend.

Maria Verona C. Eloriaga is always greeted by hearty "meows" from the security guards when she enters the building every morning.

Cat's Eye © TMS / TSP

Their goal is to look for valuable works of art and then pilfer it. But they don't steal just *any* artwork, they're actually only trying to recover their father's art collection. The collection was scattered shortly before their dad had gone missing. They believe that the works of art might give them clues as to his whereabouts.

In typical anime thief fashion, the girls send a warning (their calling card) detailing their next target before the actual robbery. Of course, this doesn't help the cops any (typical again).

Interestingly enough, the detective assigned to the case, Toshio Utsumi (Toshi in the local dubs), is the boyfriend of Hitomi! Being the typical (*na naman*) clueless male that he is, Toshio is blissfully oblivious to his sweetie's secret identity. Hitomi, on the other hand, pumps as much information as she can from the daft detective.

Of course, it also helps that the Cat's Eye Café is right across the street from the local police sta-



QUESTOR

21

'Ito ang Paborito kong Pambaon.'



Paboritong Merienda
mula umaga hanggang
hapon. May iba't
iba pang flavors:

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Pandan,
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Anime Cats

by Gary Calkins
Additional art by Aidin Viray

Okay, so here we have a catastrophic compendium of anime cats. Let's see how they all stack up.

Felines: Luna, Artemis and Diana

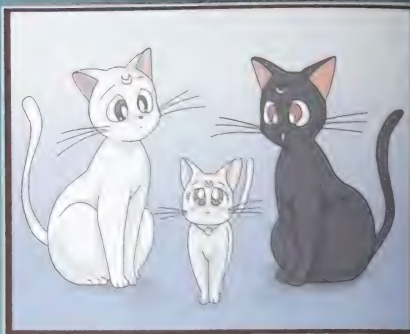
Series: Sailor Moon

Fur colors: White, black, grey and pink

Transform into: Humans with bad taste in clothing

What's their deal?

This regal feline family can talk Usagi and friends to death with their advice. But can they do Kung Fu?



Feline: Meowth

Series: Pokemon

Fur color: Pale yellow

Evolves into: Persian

Nickname: ScratchCat

Height: 1'4"

Weight: 9.0 lbs.

What's his deal?

Okay so he loves round things, especially coins. Team Rocket's pain in the mouth is a pain in the rear for Ash and company. He's one of the few pokemon who learned to talk. Big deal! Luna, Artemis and Diana can talk, and they can turn into people to boot! Besides, he doesn't know Kung Fu.

Feline: Kuroneko

Series: Trigun

Fur color: Black

What's his deal?

This perpetually tharned feline pops up every now and then in Trigun to provide comic relief for viewers of Vash and company. He may look like a mysterious free spirit, but can he do Kung Fu?



Feline: Neko-chan

Series: Ranma 1/2

Fur color: Pink

Transforms into: Sexy Chinese Amazon warrior Shampoo

Fell into: Meenowneechwon or spring of drowned cat

Fighting style when human: Joketsuzoku (Chinese Amazon Style fighting)

Weapons: Bonbori or giant spherical hammers

What's her deal?

Now this is one cool kitty who knows her Kung Fu! Bruce Lee would be proud! This sexy tabby can make any tomcat turn his head and paw the air as if showered with a ton of catnip! Whoa, I'll pour hot water on you any time babe. Okay, so she knows Kung Fu (and runs after Ranma too), but can she do those Wushu barrel rolls and Ba Gua Zhang weapon sets in feline form? I thought as much.

Feline: Karin-sama

Series: Dragon Ball

Fur color: White

What's his deal?

Scratch the grower of rejuvenating Senzu beans and guardian of the holy water under the chin! Karin lives in a tower that hangs just below Kami-sama's lookout. Although wise and intelligent, he is said to be physically weak. But one fact remains, he was one of those who trained Son Goku! Imagine being able to train one of the greatest warriors this universe has ever known! I'll climb Karin Tower anytime.





CATS ALIVE!



by The Nekomancer



Attention all cat lovers, not to mention those who're planning on buying a cat as a pet but don't know a thing or two about one, I have good news for you! **What's Michael** is one title your kind shouldn't miss out on. This funny manga was written and drawn by **Makoto Kobayashi** and the book won awards like the 1990 *New York Library Book Award* and the 1997 *Parents' Choice Award*. What's Michael is also recognized by other famous creators and critics such as *Wizard Magazine* and **Stan Sakai** (of *Usagi Yojimbo* fame).

The story revolves around a domestic, orange-striped tomcat named Michael. This book tells all about cats from the downside of having one to what makes them tick. The good thing about this manga is that there are no continuities or continuing storylines, this makes it more reader friendly. And easier too for first time readers since they don't have to figure out how to pick up where the last storyline left off.

What actually makes the story funny is the cat's owners. Michael has many different owners, which either represent his different owner per life (cats have nine lives remember?) or the writer just makes it that way in order to show you the different lifestyles of a cat owner. It also has a primer or information about cats and their personalities as different felines.

There are many types of cat owners and people (most of them remain nameless to the readers) and cats shown in the series both weird and lovable, so here's an overview of the charac-

ters. Such as the famous Yakuza called K who is a cat lover but is afraid to reveal this to his other Yakuza gangmates. His archrival M, on the other hand, secretly has a phobia of cats. There's also the famous Nyazilla, Michael's monster cat rival (he's three times bigger and fatter than Ol' Mike!). Then there's an undercover cop who is always on a stakeout but when the cat walks in his path he discovers that he needs a lot of patience when dealing with this kind of assignment. Plus, there's a typical average family which leads an...uhh... average life of cat owners. There's also a nice couple who loves Michael so much that they gave him a bride (she's still a kitten so Michael has to wait till she's mature enough to...well, you know). But later on, Michael has a family with his wife Popo and they spawn three young Michaels!

There are also stories of cats acting like people like playing a softball game against dogs, a wrestling match between Michael and Nyazilla, board meetings and other people stuff.

The first What's Michael manga I discovered were the compilations released by *Dark Horse Publishing*, a collection of four books entitled *Michael's Album*, *Living Together*, *Off the Deep End* and *Michael's Mambo*. The manga is also being serialized in *Super Manga Blast*, also released by Dark Horse. So if you're someone who loves furry critters, especially cats, this is one book you can't miss. On that, you can bet your nine lives.

Rumors about the nekomancer are true. He is as huggable as his icon.

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by LB Guerrero

A Roomful of Kitty



If there were a term for it, Shaina Magdayao's bed-room would be a Hello Kitty Room. Hello Kitty stickers adorn her door and pink walls. On her bed are Hello Kitty bed sheets and Hello Kitty pillows. On her dresser are Hello Kitty make-up boxes containing Hello Kitty lipsticks and Hello Kitty face powder. In her display shelves are probably around a hundred Hello Kitty knick knacks: from figurines and clocks and frames, to pencil holders and stationery and pens and stickers. She also has Hello Kitty towels, Hello Kitty hampers, Hello Kitty chairs, a Hello Kitty camera and even a Hello Kitty electric fan! And for this interview, Shaina was wearing (guess what?) a Hello Kitty t-shirt.

Shaina, 11, who was voted last year's most popular child actress (she appeared in the movie *Tanging Yaman*, and plays a character in an ongoing drama series, *Marinella*), is one BIG Hello Kitty fan. Although she started accumulating Hello Kitty products only two years ago when she was 9, her collection is steadily reaching vast proportions. It all started because her favorite color is pink. Shaina explains, "It's the color of a lot of Hello Kitty items."

The first items she ever bought were Hello Kitty

pens and stationery. Pretty soon, she found herself buying more and more until she built an impressive collection. Up to now, she still makes it a point to pass by Gift Gate every time she goes mallng. And she always leaves the store with a purchase.

"There are always new items in the store, so I find myself buying and buying," says Shaina. Jokingly, she adds, "I don't know how many items I usually buy, but if I were to take you shopping with me, you'd have to wear sneakers or your feet will really get tired."

Shaina has become such a regular client at Gift Gate stores that she gets invited to launches and shows of *Sanrio* products. And some of the pieces in her collection are souvenirs from these events, like the cute Hello Kitty director's chair which she received during a Hello Kitty anniversary program.

Instead of discouraging her (Hello Kitty products do cost some money ^ ^), her whole family is supportive of her hobby. In fact, part of her collection are items she received as gifts from family, as well as from friends and fans, who know about her Hello Kitty habit. According to Shaina, even her sister, popular actress *Vina Morales*, likes Hello Kitty. "She got it from me," she states with a grin.

And what about her dream Hello Kitty prod-



uct? "A Hello Kitty car," she replies. "And maybe a Hello Kitty house," she adds, "like all the kitchenware is Hello Kitty, and all the stuff around the house, including the carpet."

But why Hello Kitty? "Naaliw ako kay Hello Kitty," says Shaina. Yup, that's Hello Kitty mania in a nutshell. After all, which girl wouldn't be taken in by that cute, endearing, adorable, lovable cat and her equally cute, endearing, adorable and lovable products????

LB Guerrero's mouth is much like Hello Kitty's. Get it? ^^



Catwoman vs.

Story and Art by Jennyson Rosero

APCC NukuNuku

One late afternoon, an old woman had just finished her daily shopping. While passing a dark alleyway, she accidentally drops a can of tuna Whiskas™. Suddenly, four pairs of glowing eyes appear in the darkness. Purring and hissing follows, sounding like wild cats preparing for a...cat FIGHT!!!

The combatants: Felicia from *Darkstalkers*; the android catgirl NukuNuku; the childish Merle from *Escaflowne* and the very, uh, un-anime Catwoman from *Batman* comics. Let's get it on!!!

Out of the darkness, four sexy feline figures pounce into the light, racing for the can of Whiskas. The four catwomen look at each other, backs arched, purring as loud as truck engines. Felicia starts with her head stomp attack, sending Catwoman sprawling into the busy intersection. Crash!!! Roadkill!

One down, three to go. The innocent Merle hides underneath an overturned box, she's useless in this battle. It's all between Felicia and NukuNuku. Felicia uses her rolling attack but NukuNuku stops her by tearing off a slab of concrete from the sidewalk, transforming it into a ramp, sending Felicia flying into the air. NukuNuku catches her by the tail and slams her through a brick wall. Ow, that's gotta hurt!

Scared, Merle watches on, praying to the Fanelian gods for her safety. But it's no use, NukuNuku picks up her scent, kicks the box to reveal a sniveling, crouching Fanelian catgirl. Merle begs for mercy, offering the can of catfood to the furious android catgirl as a peace offering. But before anything is settled, Felicia rises from the rubble that buried her. She holds NukuNuku and Merle by their necks, both of them clawing and struggling, proving that Felicia is the strongest among them.

Suddenly, a pair of headlights blind the trio...it's Catwoman, now driving the same car that almost killed her a few minutes ago. The crazed Catwoman hurtles toward the threesome. The other catwomen are tharned — stunned silent and frozen in place. An even louder crash echoes through the streets. Triple Roadkill!!! Catwoman rams against a wall. Silence.

vs. Merle

vs. Felicia

After a few moments, the four stand up... resurrected...and the fight goes on. Completely forgetting the reason why they fought in the first place, the can of catfood now lies crushed and spilled on the cold pavement. Knowing that cats have nine lives, we'll never know when this battle will end.

Jennyson Rosero purrs like a cat whenever he is stroked.

Do you want to see your favorite anime characters duke it out on the battlefield? Or better yet, do you have an idea on who would prevail in such an altercation? Well, we've got news for you. You can now send in your ideas for future Fights! Just tell us whom you'd like to see in a slugfest or you can even write them yourself. Send your ideas or contributions to:

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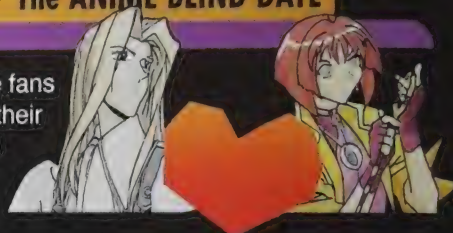
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The Tarot of Escaflowne

"They're tarot cards. They can tell you your fortune."
- Hitomi Kanzaki

The true origins of tarot cards remain a mystery. According to popular belief, it was invented by the Egyptians. Others say it was the gypsies or even the Knights Templar. At any rate, the cards found their way to Europe by the mid-1400s where wealthy families like the Visconti and Sforza clans of Milan had personal decks designed for them.

Several formats of the deck exist, but all are composed of 78 cards divided into the 22 Major Arcana and 56 Minor Arcana. The Major Arcana are the cards that appear at the title sequence of *Escaflowne*, like "The Tower" from Fateful Confession (Episode 1) and "The Lovers" in Eternal Love (Episode 26). The Minor Arcana are composed of four court cards — king, queen, knight and page — as well as 10 numbered cards in each of the four suit: swords, cups, staves and pentacles. These suits represent rational and strategic thinking, emotions, creativity and material concerns respectively. The Minor Arcana actually is the origin of the ordinary deck of playing cards with the knight and page combined into the jack and the suits transformed into spades, hearts, clubs and diamonds. Incidentally, *Star Wars* fans will also notice that Han Solo's favorite gambling game of *sabacc* is a complete rip-off of the tarot.

Hitomi's deck in Yuzuru Yashiro's shoujo manga version is identical to the modern tarot set, with the crest of Fanelia on the reverse. It was apparently a memento given to her by her grandmother. The deck designed by Kimitoshi Yamane for the series, however, differs slightly from the modern format popularized by the Rider-Waite set. The Major Arcana still follows that of the ordinary decks, but the Minor Arcana suits are patterned after the Merlin Tarot, where the swords correspond to birds, the staves to serpents, the cups to fishes, and the beasts to pentacles. Plus, the design on the back was changed to a gold pentacle on a blue background. Hitomi's grandmother had bought this particular deck in Yokohama and presented it to Hitomi as a young girl. (You wish your grandma is that cool...)

Some say that a good reading can be made using only the 22 Major Arcana cards, but most think that using all 78 cards gives a more complete picture. The more traditional practitioners of the tarot al-

ways turn reversed cards upright and interpret them as such. More recently, however, reversed cards have acquired a meaning of their own, usually the opposite of the original interpretation. Hitomi prefers to follow the latter school of thought, but the choice lies with the reader.

The first step in doing a reading is to ask the question. The cards are then shuffled either by the reader or the questioner and laid out into a pattern or "spread". There are several choices of spreads open to the reader. The simplest is the three-card spread, with the cards representing past, present and future. The slightly more complex "horseshoe" has seven cards laid out in a V-formation, with the fourth card in the middle and three cards on either side of it. The first three cards are past, present and immediate future. The fifth card represents environmental influences, the sixth shows the obstacles facing the questioner and the last card is the final outcome. The middle fourth card indicates the best course of action for the person to take; whether or not this advice is followed is indicated in cards three and seven. Others include the yin-yang spread and the 12-card astrological spread.

Hitomi's favorite is the popular 10-card Celtic Cross. Card 1 shows present circumstances, 2 the opposing factors. Note that the second card is always interpreted using its upright meaning, since it is neither upright nor reversed, but rather "crosses" the questioner. Card 3 is the distant past, fourth the recent past, fifth the person's goals and sixth is the immediate future. The seventh card represents the questioner's personality, eight the environmental factors, nine the person's hopes (fears is reversed), and ten the final outcome. A good interpretation takes note of how the different factors influence the result.

Now for an example, taken right from a reading Hitomi did in the series. In *The Blue-Eyed Prince* (Episode 12), Allen Schezar requested her to do a reading on Miguel Lavariel, the Zaibach soldier they had captured. Using the Celtic Cross, these were the cards she got: 1 - three of birds, 2 - five of beasts, 3 - three of serpents reversed, 4 - Warrior of Dragons, 5 - The World, 6 - Death, 7 - blank card. I had to extrapolate a bit on the first card since it was shown covered in the series, but I'm pretty sure I'm right. ^^; According to her, these meant that "a great power

is guiding everything towards an end". In particular, she interpreted the first two cards as "Danger, Conflict", the three of serpents as "Tension", and the Warrior of Dragons/Serpents as representing Van. She's pretty accurate (of course!). Distant past — the World — can mean the harmony of Gaea then. The recent past and present circumstances indicate the turmoil brewing, while the 3rd card — aspirations — show that someone is stirring things up. On top of all that, Van was partially responsible for everything that was happening (but this wasn't mentioned by Kanzaki-san). All these led to the immediate future, Death, a sudden and irreversible change in circumstances. This was borne out by the series, which showed that Van and the Escaflowne, along with Hitomi, were the only ones who could stop Zaibach Emperor Dornkirk's ambition of recasting the future in his image. When she got to card 7 — representing the Dragonslayer Miguel — she got a blank; sure enough, the guy had broken out of his prison cell and was slugging his way towards his guymelef. Sadly for this exercise, she never got to finish her reading; Hitomi and the gang were arrested in mid-reading after being implicated by the doppelganger agent Zongi.

With a little practice, tarot cards are fairly easy to master. The most difficult parts are memorizing the interpretations. The best way to learn is really by doing as many readings as you can. Heck, there are a lot of potential volunteers out there, so that's no problem, ne? Another reason to take up fortune-telling as a hobby — the cards are collectible. There are literally dozens of different decks, ranging from the traditional Rider-Waite set, the genuine Merlin tarot, and even a *Lord of the Rings* tarot set/card game, all with different art designs to suit your taste. If you still can't let go of your anime obsessions, not to worry. There are actually cool anime decks out there, ranging from Escaflowne the series, *Escaflowne the Movie*, *Oh! My Goddess*, and *Gundam Wing*! (cough* Relena Peacecraft as the Empress*cough) Sadly, they only feature the Major Arcana cards, but who the heck cares?! They're still usable, not to mention ultra-kawaii. Keep them around just in case you encounter a pillar of light and get transported to Gaea — they'll come in real handy.

Pamela Ang looks like Miaka.

Special thanks to:

Anderton, Bill. Tarot

Bunning, Joan. *Learning the Tarot - An On-Line Course*. <http://www.learn.tarot.com/>

Loo, Egan. *Escaflowne Compendium*. <http://www.anime.net/escaflowne/>



PETS THAT TH

by Nick Ballesteros

Have you ever wanted to keep a pet but there are constraints to your doing so? With ever-decreasing residential space and busy schedules, you may find tending to a pet impractical. Well, as they said in *Jurassic Park*, "life finds a way". And it did, in technology. Enter the digital era of virtual pets!

TAMAGO = EGG

In 1996, small alien creatures crash-landed on earth and were found by Professor Banzo and his assistant Mikachu. The Professor made keychain-sized, egg-shaped casings to enable the aliens to survive on earth. Mikachu painted some of these eggs and brought them to school. I don't know the wisdom behind such an action but it started the Tamagotchi craze.

That's the story Bandai (www.bandai.com) published for one of their most famous toys ever, the Tamagotchi. Designed by Ms. Maita Aki as a toy for everyone, it nonetheless became more popular with the girls, perhaps because of the nurturing nature required by the Tamagotchi. Maita's concept of the toy is that it is a pet that you can bring anywhere and that it should be *kawaii* (cute). From the day it is hatched, your baby pet (a *Babitchi* or *Shirobabitchi*) will need constant attention on the first hour, and when it reaches its next stage of development (a *Marutchi* or *Tonmarutchi*), it is able to do whatever it does in its shell with your loving supervision. When it reaches its adult stage, it will have developed habits that you have molded it to have. It will return to its home planet eventually, but your actions towards it will have an effect on how long your pet will stay on earth. And then you can start hatching another egg.

The Tamagotchi became an instant craze in over 30 countries, including the Philippines.

There is a counterpart to the Tamagotchi for the boys. It's the Digimon (www.acedigimon.com), released in 1997 in the US. The Digimon is also a small creature on a portable device that needs caring for. But it develops eventually into a lean, mean fighting machine and that's where the real fun starts. It's sort of a Tamagotchi that is given the Pokémon treatment: Which leads us to...

PIKACHU! I CHOOSE YOU!

Another virtual pet that teemed with interactivity for endless playing pleasure is the Pokémon (or Pocket Monsters) for the Nintendo GameBoy (www.gameboy.com). Pokémon redefined the term monster from being huge, ugly and deadly to cute, cuddly and deadly. The objective of the game is to



capture as many monsters as you can and train them to pit against Pokémon of other trainers. With practice and strategy, you can be the greatest Pokémon trainer!

Pokémon also became popular in the US as a game which enables you to engage in battle with other GameBoy players. Complementing the demand for these cuddly monsters is the anime with the same title, which narrates the exploits of Ash, a Pokémon trainer, and his ever-so-famous sidekick Pikachu, as well as the card game.

CELFONE PETS

An offshoot of the Tamagotchi phenomenon is the arrival of digital pets in celfones. Not much can be said of this, though. The interaction is text-based, and the pet responds to you via SMS as well. You can view your pet by invoking the "view pet" command and the system will send you a logo showing your pet. The menu system is made easier by Smart's ZED and Globe's GlobeXplore. It's like a long-distance relationship with your virtual pet, and you know what they say about long-distance relationships...

HERE FISHY, FISHY

For those who really can't find time to carry around a game console or egg keychains and dabble with it without looking too juvenile (read: the work force), there are other virtual pets that you can pour your TLC into.

There's the Hewlett Packard (manufacturer of printers) MOPyfish. MOPy stands for Multiple Original Printouts (printing multiple original copies

LIVE ON IS AND OS

mopying — rather than photocopying). It basically goes like this: the more you print, the more points you earn, points that you can use to buy stuff for your fish such as rocks and plants. MOPyfish can run as a screensaver, so you can occasionally feed or play with it in between work breaks. Be sure to give it the proper attention, or else you will find it floating lifelessly one morning. Reality check: virtual pets can die.

MOPyfish is freely downloadable at <http://193.129.255.102/mopyfish/>

If you feel you are ready to face the challenges of a full aquarium environment, try the Aquazone Virtual Aquarium (www.aquazone.com). The base program enables you to design your aquarium by adding plants, gravel, toys and others. You also get a variety of fish to start with (a number of tetras, angelfish and mollies). There are meter gauges to monitor your fish health and environment so you can take good care of them. Here's the twist in this virtual pet. If you run out of fish food or medicine, or you want to put in a new species (or replace a group that died), you can go to the aquazone site and buy them (using real money, of course), just like in a real aquarium environment. Radical, huh?

WALK THE WALK

Now, if you're one of those people who likes a more direct interaction without the hassle of cleaning up the mess, *Sony Corporation* created a pet robot called Aibo (www.aibo.com). Aibo, which means Artificial Intelligence roBOT, is a quadruped with design aesthetics similar with that of a dog. Developed by D21 Labs, it is already on its second generation. Even with a steep price (around US\$2,000.00), it is in constant demand not only in Japan but also in the States. The Aibo learns from its environment through audio receptors, voice recognition, infrared distance, pressure and light sensors. You train it through reinforcement. When it does something good, you say "good boy!". When you want it to stop doing a certain action, you say "don't do that". It can even take pictures!

This robot pet acts almost like a normal dog. You won't find it running after cars but it can scamper about, droop to sleep, respond to commands, dance and play with you.

The Aibo stores its behavioral characteristics through memory sticks. Think of it as floppy disks for your PC that you can save files into and exchange with other floppies. This memory flexibility gives the Aibo even more possibilities. You can store specific sounds that it can make, or other action sequences you can invoke it to do through a PC program.

Aside from the Aibo, you can also try your "geeky" prowess (no finger pointing please) through *Lego's*

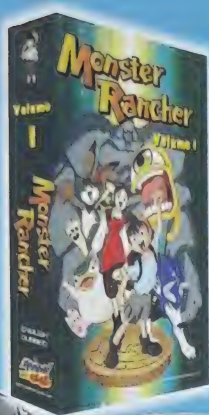


MindStorms (www.mindstorms.lego.com). The MindStorms system gives you the power to design your robot from scratch (when you've learned the basics) and program it. The US\$220.00 package includes the Lego bricks, programming software, the microprocessor and an infrared system to download data from the PC to the robot. Like the Aibo, the robot is able to act through light and touch sensors and motors.

Technology is increasingly finding its way to adapt to our life. With digital entertainment, pets are no exception. So don't be surprised if the time comes when movies declare: "No digital animal was harmed in the making of this film." Well, gotta feed my MOPyfish!

Nick Ballesteros is a prototype for the Aibo.

Monsters Rule on Video!

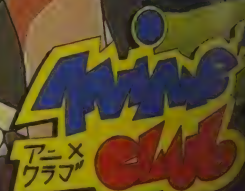


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Dual Trouble

Dual! *Parallel Trouble Adventure*. The title refers to dual realms that exist. One world mirrors the other and both are locked in a mortal power struggle. Their means of settling conflicts is through battle with mechs or mechanized robots.

One would surmise that Dual is a mixture of *Evangeliion* and *Tenchi Muyo!* That is not too far-fetched, but Dual has its own character, enough to stand on its own. The dual structural world of Dual emerged during an excavation of a forgotten civilization. The difference between the real world and the parallel one is the phenomenon that surrounds the civilization itself. Namely, its political status quo and the ominous super weapon. The most significant difference though is the existence of the main protagonist, Kazuki Yotsuga. Kazuki is an unpopular high school boy, besieged by images of fighting mechs and destruction. Those images piqued the interest of a very popular high school girl named, Mitsuki Sanada. She introduces him to her father, the not-so-prominent physicist, Ken Sanada.

When Kazuki gets transported to the parallel world, he accidentally ends up piloting the white mech, CR-01 aka Halzinen. This puzzled Professor Sanada because all the mechs are designed in such a manner that only females can operate them. Later on in the series, Kazuki gets to pilot the immensely powerful gray mech, Ginmu aka Zinv.

There is a lot of mystery behind Kazuki Yotsuga's character: (1) Why can he pilot the mech Halzinen, and all mechs built for females for that matter, when he is definitely male. (2) Why does the computer in the parallel world recognize him as an ally. (3) Why does one of the characters called D show fondness towards him when she doesn't to anyone else. There are a lot of questions hanging in the story and all will be brought to a conclusion in the latter episodes of this somewhat short series.

The animation is top notch. The look is very Evangelion but the story is much less serious. The fighting of mechs are filled with action, sus-



pense and pyrotechnics which makes for a lot of tense moments. Interesting also is Kazuki's development as a pilot. As he becomes more proficient with his skills as a pilot, all new powers and abilities are opened to him. He shows unlimited potential as a pilot (similar to Gokou's ever increasing fighting potential in *Dragon Ball Z*).

Dual's story and character designs were made by Masaki Kajishima and is directed by Katuhito Akiyama and written by Yosuke Kuroda. It was produced by Pioneer Entertainment and Anime International Company.

— Dong Alejar



Boys be what?

Met Kanzaki Kyoichi, 17 years old, nice, well-mannered, naive. Meet Nitta Chiharu, his childhood friend, 17 years old, athletic. Chiharu has blossomed into a beautiful young woman and Kanzaki has started to notice.

Can childhood friendships slowly turn into feelings that make you have butterflies in your stomach, sweaty hands and shaky knees? Kanzaki knows, but someone has gotten the jump on him. Chiharu's track and field sempai has already confessed his interest in her! Do childhood memories last forever? Will Kanzaki and Chiharu live happily ever after? Will I barf up my lunch?

If you're into slice-of-life anime which deal with relationships then this one is probably for you. But beware! The boys in *Boys Be...* stare at girls' butts, glue mirrors on their shoes to look up girls' skirts, sneak a peak at girls' cleavages, dream of girls' boobies and drool when someone is not wearing a brassiere. You know, normal things that boys do. Remember your little black book of girls' names, addresses, phone numbers and vital stats? Bring on the nosebleeds!

— Sukebe Kenjo



Once Upon an Elf

Once upon a time, in a small rustic village near the sea, there was a legend. The legend of three people who would magically save the inhabitants from evil. Time passed and evil did come to town. Evil looking (read: ugly) that is, and blabbermouths too. They threatened to kill everyone unless the elfin maiden living there was surrendered to them. All lost hope except for said maiden who trusted the legend more than anything else in the world. Her faith called in three strangers wearing non-standard rustic village clothing. They fulfilled the prophecy and delivered the village from the evil menace (read: they kicked ugly butts). The villagers offered them anything and everything but they refused. They were truly of the heroic type, giving and not expecting anything in return — except: WHAT YOU WANT ME TO STRIP?!!!

Once upon a time, there was a young elfin High Priestess named Celcia Mariclaire who made a teeny, tiny mistake. Her spell backfired, calling into her world strange objects and, worse, strange people with strange clothes. But, as a responsible elf, she TRIED to cast another spell that should have sent the strangers back to their own world. Unfortunately, besides being strange, one of the "visitors" also had a loud mouth and the ability to make her lose concentration and temper. Her spell broke and was scattered throughout the land. Sacrificing her dignity, she made one last attempt to get rid of, er, help the newcomers, she became their guide albeit in a disguise, a permanent disguise unless they find all the spells: I CAN'T STAY AS A DOG!

Once upon a time, there were three people: an award winning actress named Airi Komiyama, a curry-obsessed martial artist called Junpei and a young girl with an affinity for guns and tanks named Ritsuko Inou who otherwise lived normal lives. They were just minding their own businesses when suddenly they were transported to another world where elves, humans and other beings tried to co-exist. They didn't want to be there so they took on the task of finding all the pieces of the spell cast by the elfin High Priestess (who brought them there in the first place). Now, they travel throughout this strange land on their tank with a mutant dog as a guide, stripping off the clothes of elfin maidens: IT CAN'T BE THAT BAD...

Once upon a time, there was a rumor. A rumor so bad, they sent even the most daring elfin maid into hiding. According to gossip, a bunch of lunatics was scouring the land looking for elves and divesting them of their clothing. This was probably not true because the rumor also said that Celcia-sama, the High Priestess of all elves, was with them but she would never allow such audacity to happen. She — ACK! IT'S TRUE! THE RUMORS ARE TRUE! HELP! THOSE WHO HUNT ELVES ARE HERE!

The end? Not by a long shot! Do you know how many elves we're talking about here?!

— Cecil "Bilbo Baggins" Estrada

Source: <http://scythe.net/archon/index.html>

Barbarians at the Gate

Gatekeepers character designs and illustrations were created by popular *Nadesico* artist Keiji Gotoh and it is written by the people at Gainax (famous for the brain twisting series *Evangelion*). Even though the Gatekeepers story is quite difficult to define, it is not as complex and perplexing as *Evangelion*. Gatekeepers is set in Japan in 1969 during the Japanese economic boom. Unbeknownst to the populace, mysterious "invaders" lurk among them just looming, waiting to wreak havoc on their unsuspecting prey.

Most of the action takes place in the city of Tokyo. The plot revolves around a group of children that has the ability to open dimensions, hence the name Gatekeepers. Their powers vary depending on the kind of gate that the Gatekeepers can open. One gate allows the character to wield an energy stick. Another gate allows another character to create a bow and arrow of pure energy. Others enhance abilities of the characters such as strength and athleticism. Some Gatekeepers can even open gates that can suck in the marauding invaders into its vortex.

The first few episodes center around gathering the various Gatekeepers and bringing them to AEGIS (Alien Extermination Global Intercept System). It is a division in the government sort of similar to that of the MIB (Men In Black). The two main characters — Shinji, the male character with a band aid on his nose, and Ruriko, the female love interest of Shinji — were the first to be recruited by AEGIS. Soon, their





Crest of the Stars

Jinto Jint's life changed forever when the Human kind Empire Abh took over his home planet of Martine. Not a single shot was fired nor was any blood shed. He is sent off to study the language and culture of the Abh to prepare himself for his future as a nobleman — a future he never dreamed of nor wanted. Now, Jinto is entering the next phase of his training and he is about to meet his first Abh, the lovely Laffel, an Abh Imperial Princess. Together, they will have to fight for their lives when civil war erupts in their very own little corner of the universe.

ranks increase when they travel the globe to recruit other gate keepers to help out in their cause to rid the world of the deadly invaders.

The invaders take the form of ordinary humans. They sometimes have trouble accepting their status as invaders for they have assumed human lives and were given human memories. They desperately wrestle against the urge to revert to their monstrous form but to no avail. They eventually give in to the urges and assume their true form as invaders.

The animation of Gatekeepers is topnotch stuff! They incorporate hand-drawn animation with computer generated animation to a tee. The effect is similar to the animation found in the classic *Blue Submarine Six*. That is saying a lot since Blue Sub won numerous accolades at the Japanese animation awards. Gatekeepers originated from a Playstation RPG by Gonzo. Which is why the story has RPG aspects written all over it. You know, the usual RPG fare of recruiting members to your party, developing their abilities and using them against a common enemy? The series jumps from serious to comedic numerous times during the course of the show. Though this definitely does not detract its story telling. At first glance it doesn't seem much, but stick to it and it grows on you. Believe me, Gatekeepers is a keeper.

— Dong Alejar



Moja? Moja!

Say "moja!" and the image of an orange furball which loves to eat and play all day immediately comes to mind.

Hailing from the planet Moja-Moja, Mojacko crashed on earth due to a malfunction in his spaceship. Together with the faithful but wisecracking robot Dono, Mojacko explores the new planet and pronounces it as backwater until he meets Surao, a boy obsessed with science fact/fiction (it doesn't make much difference to him) and the president of a two-man club devoted to that subject.

Surao and Mojacko bond instantly because of their love for just lazing around and daydreaming/playing. Joined by the other member of Surao's club, Miki, the two lead their new gang into various adventures throughout the universe once Mojacko's ship is repaired. Soon, Mojacko grows to love his newfound friends so much that he stays on earth.

Surao's sometimes rival, sometimes friend Wutan makes their lives miserable once in a while and soon, Mojacko's siblings join the fray. Mojari is a level-headed pink moja while Mojaru is a baby who can only say Moja, Moja (only his siblings and Dono can understand what he's actually saying) but has the IQ of a mechanical genius.

Their adventures are fairly random and funny until Momonja appears. He is Mojacko's worst rival and his mission is to find the legendary "greatest treasure in the whole universe" of the Maharada Moja. Nobody knows what this treasure is and the Maharada only gave three vague clues. The battle to find the treasure begins! As soon as Mojacko stops joking around and Momonja stops turning to stone whenever he sees Mojari.

— Cecil "Mojari" Estrada



Hakkenden: Son(s) of a Dog!

Awa province is besieged. Two feuding families, the Anzai and the Satomi, are fighting for control. As fate would have it, the Satomi are plagued by famine and the Anzai, seizing the opportunity, attack their luckless enemies.

The Satomi barricade themselves within the castle and with their supplies dwindling, they send attempt after desperate attempt to assassinate Lord Anzai. All of these are in vain, however, and in a fit of despondence, Lord Satomi pleads with his dog Yatsafusa that if he can bring Satomi the head of Anzai, he will give the canine his daughter Fuse's hand in marriage.

Though it was partly in jest, Lord Satomi awoke the next day to find that his faithful dog had performed well above and beyond the call of duty. With their leader dead, the Anzai forces were quickly repelled. Lord Satomi, however, refuses to fulfill his part of the bargain. To stop Yatsafusa from going berserk and attacking anything in sight, and following the dictates of filial piety, Princess Fuse goes off to live in a cave with Yatsafusa, declaring that she is now dead to the world.

After a few days, Fuse dreams that she is pregnant and that a curse will be placed upon her offspring. Horrified, she refuses to let Yatsafusa anywhere near her. Meanwhile, a Satomi retainer, Daisuke Kanamari, has come to rescue Fuse but as he tries to kill the dog, he accidentally hits Fuse as well. As she lay dying, the eight prayer beads from her necklace are scattered to the four winds.

These eight beads, with eight virtues written upon them, represent eight warriors — Fuse's "sons" — whose paths are all fatefully intertwined and will inevitably cross.

— Inu no Baka

Shin Hakkenden

Shin Hakkenden is a relatively new TV series roughly based on the old story *The Hakkenden* (*Legend of the Eight Dog Warriors*) by Pioneer. The main difference between Shin Hakkenden and The Hakkenden is the former's setting. Shin Hakkenden's story is set in the distant future and it revolves around a stripling lad, Kou, who wields a sword. His mother left him in the care of his father after he was born with a mystical sphere said to be possessed only by those of Empress Fuse's bloodline. This is more of a curse than an honor. His father, a great swordsmith, makes a sword for him with the sphere embedded in it. The young whipper snapper sure can handle that big sword which results in fantastic sword play sequences. There is a question about his gender, though. At first, he is mistaken for a sexy young lady when discovered unconscious after a space cruiser crash lands on a near barren planet. But after regaining consciousness, Kou adamantly insists that he is a boy.

Shin Hakkenden follows the basic structure of the Hakkenden legend. So maybe that's why the hero has fangs. Because he is descended from a dog?!

Anyway, Kou must then reunite with his brothers in spirit who also bear the mystic spheres. And when they do, expect fantastic action from this science fiction version of the famous Hakkenden novel by Bakin Kyokutei. Shin Hakkenden also boasts of great character designs from renowned artist Atsuko Ishida.

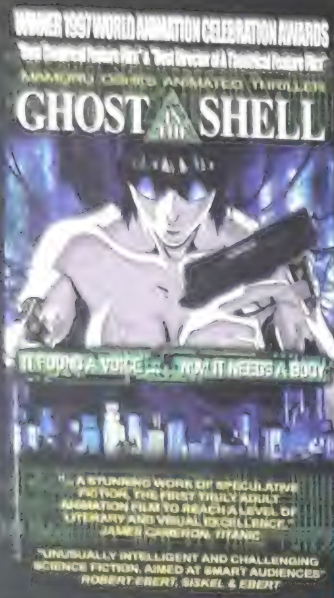
— Dong Alejar



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Wishful Think

by Robin C. Rivera

T rue Gaea-blue fans of the series *Vision of Escaflowne* have, in all probability (discrepancies due to the Fate Alteration Engine not considered), scoured the entire Mystic Moon for all four Escaflowne original soundtracks. Those who might even have traces of *Ryugin* blood most likely also possess the hard-to-find Escaflowne drama albums (only one is available locally, last we checked). Alas, these fortunate individuals probably have the wealth of Dryden at their fingertips as well.

What then does a devoted Esca fan on a budget do? *The Lovers Only* OST, which we reviewed before, normally satisfies most avid followers of the series but if you should come into a bit of extra cash, here's a brief description of the other soundtracks to help you make up your mind. A certain pendant, of course, could also come in handy.

Over the Sky, the very first Escaflowne soundtrack, contains the full version of the series' opening and ending themes as well as familiar background music. Among the tracks unique to this album, "Romance" stands out. A tranquil instrumental, it evokes the joy of returning to something one cherishes without being unbearably sentimental. The vocal number, "Empty the Pocket", performed by **Maaya Sakamoto**, was not heard in the series but, nonetheless, it's a delightfully carefree song about setting out on a voyage.

Lyricist **Aceilux**, who wrote the lyrics for all the English songs in the Escaflowne soundtracks, does the vocals for "White Dove". The sweeping melody tends to drown his voice but that in no way reduces the joy of listening to this song. The OST ends with "Deja Blue", the music box version of the opening theme. Its last note lingers long after the song fades out.

Simply called *Vision of Escaflowne Original Soundtrack 2*, the second Esca OST is a

Various Artists

The Vision of Escaflowne Over

Sky, OST 2, OST 3

Victor Entertainment



ing

more somber collection. This is the only album that features "Shadow of Doubt", the ominous background theme that accompanied Folken's every appearance, as well as "A Far Cry", the instrumental that underscored the characters' dark memories. They best illustrate the tortured conflicts that made this series so powerful.

Apart from "Vision of Escafloone", "Fanelia", "Cradle Song" and "Hitomi Theme", the other instrumental tracks in this album are more obscure with quite a number reveling in a heady Middle Eastern beat.

Among the vocal numbers, the ballad "If You" sung by Yamane Oe offers gentle relief for broken souls in need of renewal.

Now the third OST, *Vision of Escafloone Original Soundtrack 3*, is in our opinion the best complement to *Lover's Only*. It contains familiar tunes the latter lacks, namely: "Short Notice" which is the music played whenever the next episode is previewed (you'll even hear the guy who announces, "Esukafurone"), "Aoi Hitomi" the song heard as Hitomi runs away from Allen and sung to the melody of "Fanelia"; and, finally, that heart-breaking train scene ballad "Hikari no naka e" ("Into the Light"). It's the one with the line, "Sayonara, aishiteru..."

Are you dying to hear Folken whistle that Fanelian tune all over again? That's here too as the track called "Fatal."

The CD lining of both OST 2 and 3 also include a colored booklet with stills from the series, production credits and lyrics in English and Japanese. Now, don't we all wish we had Dryden's wealth too?



Vision of Escafloone (Tenjou no Escafloone) TV Tokyo Broadcast Entertainment Inc.

Robin Rivero owns a cat named Merla, a crow named Folken and a dove named Von.



READY TO RUMBLE

DESIGNER: CAPCOM

BOARD: NAOMI

AVAILABLE FOR:

SEGA, DREAMCAST, ARCADE COIN-OP

CAPCOM VS. SNK

(MILLENNIUM FIGHT 2000)

by JG Nizuka

Basically, the game is a 2D fighting-oriented one (as if we came to expect *Baldur's Gate*!). It uses the Naomi board which really showcases the strong points of this kind of a game but there are quite a few, ahem, "bugs". It's quite surprising that CAPCOM went for the four button setup when we all know that the *SF* games use six buttons. They have managed to make up for the missing fierce punch and roundhouse kick buttons by pressing the C or D buttons plus a directional move from the joystick. This feature really ticked off the *SF* fans who weren't used to the setup and it really hampered the way they played the game (It really sucks when you're in the middle of a combo and one or more buttons are not functioning properly). Add to that the seemingly useless roll move by pressing both A and B buttons together — something *KOF* players are used to but be-moaned just the same in this game because the designers reduced the effectivity for possible counter attack. You can't move while in the roll and the reaction time has really slowed plus, the character gets hit a lot more often in the middle of the move. Most gamers agree that CAPCOM tried to put together the best features of *SF* and *KOF* but ended up making a half-baked product.

No wonder CAPCOM announced that they would make a sequel a few days after this game came out. ESP? They just saw that the game was too hurried, that the gameplay had to be more scrutinized. Remember that both *SF* and *KOF* controls are different in nature and I'm already looking forward to what the designers will do for the sequel in that they have to integrate two different modes of play control. Not the easiest job in the world boys and girls!!!

Air blocking is nonexistent (I really thought they would include that since both games have it). There are two types of jumps (very *KOF* but CAPCOM adopted it for *SF3*). You can forget about air combos (I liked that feature) and most of the characters' moves were removed/replaced. If the SNK characters had the same features, they would absolutely KILL the CAPCOM guys.

The player has the option of choosing from two styles or "grooves" before he/she gets into the action. You can choose the CAPCOM or SNK groove. This is simply the system by which your characters' power meter is created. The CAPCOM groove is really just like the power meter in *SF Zero-Alpha* where you stack up to three power

bars and use them up with each super move. Your super move's level is determined by the number of buttons you push and the number of power bars you have accumulated be it level 1, 2 or 3.

The SNK groove is patterned after the *KOF* system and lets the player charge the meter by pressing C and D at the same time, making your character open for attacks. When the meter is full, you can execute the super move. Also, when your character's life meter starts to blink in SNK groove, that means you can do the super move(s) without charging anymore. When you have charged your character to the maximum of the meter plus the life is blinking, your character will execute the maxxed-out version of the super move (something you can use to get out of a potentially game-ending situation). Personally, I recommend the SNK groove for beginners since your personal technique is not yet that refined. Which one has an advantage? Well, I have to admit, and even most gamers will agree that the SNK groove kinda outdoes the CAPCOM groove. But in fairness, the CAPCOM groove is for players who are really at an above average level of play and do not need the cheesiness of supers to get by in a game. I suggest that all you players out there try both of the grooves out. Not to brag but, I can do with either of them (I just had to say that!!!).

Having selected your groove, you now proceed to the character selection. Now the designers really thought of this system of selection and I have to say that I am satisfied with the results. All in all, there are 28 regulars plus five hidden characters in the game (14 for CAPCOM, 14 for SNK plus Evil Ryu, Orochi Iori, Akuma, Morrigan and Nakoruru). The designers came up with a ratio point system which means each character has a corresponding point value for team balance and to avoid getting the really cheesy ones all in one team. Imagine a team of Ryu, Ken, Iori Yagami and Kyo Kusanagi under *KOF 99* selection rules (I haven't even included Terry Bogard). The secret characters cost you all of your 4 ratio points although there's a way to bypass that because I saw one player with two Ryu's and one was the evil version (anybody know that trick? Please e-mail me!). The characters are divided into groups of 1 point up to 3 points with 3 points being the "boss" characters like Geese Howard, M. Bison and the like. Two points constitute the "regular" guys like Ryu, Kyo, Iori and Chun-li. One-point charac-

are surprised by the "weaklings" such as Kyo, Iori, Benimaru, Shingo, Vert, Seta, and others. Personally, one major criticism or designers made was in the selection of these "weakling" characters. Most of these guys lack more than 1/2 of the 2-pointers and even some of the 3-pointers. Secondly, the observation of some that the 1-pointers do less damage than they take is somewhat untrue with Blanka and Dhalman being the prime examples of major underestimation. If you are a Benimaru user and can adjust to the control changes made to him, that's another character I recommend using.

Overall, the characters in the game were really toned down in terms of their special abilities especially the SNK characters. I guess the designers wanted some sort of a test run as to which character really thrives in this hybrid program. But for the life of me, I cannot understand as to why some characters included in the game are given the point value they have like Raiden. Why the hell is he there? If CAPCOM wanted a counterpoint to Zangief as grappler, why not Clark or even Yashiro? I know a lot of gamers would love to use Clark in this system environment since he is the unofficial grappler supreme of the SNK spectrum.

I would like to point out that at best, this game is some sort of a "beta version" for possible sequels to come. As much as the title has generated so much hype especially for the die-hard fanatics, we are all left with somewhat of an empty spot which I hope can be filled when the sequel arrives. Or at least they can give us an improvement of this one. It would be almost certain that two of the gaming giants can come up with something more substantial than this. If not, well...

Thanks for the Input guys!!!!

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<http://maxpages.com>

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The X Factor

Newtype, *n.* New as opposed to old; extremely popular anime magazine; the next stage of human evolution; a human gifted with extraordinary mental powers.

What's X All About

by Sidney Ang

After War Gundam X, the third of the alternate universe Gundam series finally invades the local airwaves after *Gundam Wing* and *G Gundam*. Gundam X focuses on one of the most important concepts in Gundam mythology, the concept of Newtypes.

Newtypes are the next step in evolution for humanity as they migrate into space. Freed from the constraints of gravity, humans would develop mental powers and evolve into a new race called Newtype.

Prior to Gundam X, Newtypes were only featured in Yoshiyuki Tomino's original *Mobile Suit Gundam* and his follow up *Z Gundam*. In Gundam X, Newtypes are an important story element, the major players are Newtypes in one way or another.

Fifteen years after the Seventh Space War raged between the Earth Federation and the Space Revolutionary Army, the Earth has been reduced to a battered wasteland after the massive colonies were dropped on the planet. In a desert town, in what was once North America, two people dressed as Federation officers are attempting to swindle money from the crowd by promising protection when a mobile suit suddenly appears and attacks the inhabitants. A 15-year-old boy named Garrod Ran shows up and steals the mobile suit from its pilot. Garrod is later approached by a man who asks him to rescue a certain girl named Tiffa Adil who is being held captive. Garrod agrees and heads towards the ship where Tiffa is locked up.

Breaking into the captain's room, he steals a mobile suit controller, something which he hopes to sell. He locates Tiffa and tells her that he's there to rescue her. Bringing Tiffa back to the old man, Garrod sees that Tiffa is terrified of him and runs away with her. They are chased by three mobile suits. Tiffa leads him to an abandoned base where Garrod discovers a GX9900 Gundam X in perfect condition. With the Gundam X, he easily defeats the three mobile suits.

Following the trend set by *G Gundam*, Gundam X offers mecha buffs more Gundam variations. From the transforming Gundam Ashtaron to the insanely powerful Gundam Double X that has a satellite cannon system which can vaporize an entire colony with just one shot.

We are also introduced to a new and diverse set of characters: Garrod Ran, the impulsive and headstrong lead character; Tiffa Adil, the quiet

and caring Newtype lass and object of Garrod's affection; Jamil Neate, the brooding captain of the mobile land ship *Freeden*; and the cool and calculating Frost Brothers.

Most loyal followers of Gundam know that the original series was cut short to 39 episodes from the intended 52 due to poor ratings (or so they say). Well all I can say is, if you like big bad mobile suits, epic space battles, attractive and misunderstood characters, you will find all these in After War Gundam X.

Giving You the X

by Maria Verona C. Elonaga

This article was written shortly after episode 1 of Gundam X aired for the first time on local TV. By the time this issue comes out, who knows, the series may have finished its run already. We thought it'd be a kick if we could tell you our initial impressions of the series after seeing only the first episode. Now that you've seen most (if not all) of the series for yourself, see if what we initially thought about Gundam X holds squat.

I have to confess, I'm not a Gundam fan. I've only seen one series — Gundam Wing (the local dubbed version, at that) — so I can only compare this one to what I've seen prior to it. The reason why I saw GW through to the end is the amusing Tagalog dubs. This is the same reason why I'm watching Gundam X now. Giving credit where credit is due, the Tagalog script and the dubbing have improved a lot. To say that it is now more pleasing to the ears wouldn't be much of a stretch. However, they sometimes fall back to their old ways.

Where GW had such "sterling" lines like "*Ang Wing Gundam ang pinakamakapangyarihan sa mga Gundam dahil sa lahat ng Gundam siya ang makapangyarihan sa lahat.*" X has "brilliant" lines like "*Kailangan ayusin natin ang plano para maayos ang lahat.*" Yes, they still are prone to redundancy and idiotly juxtaposed sentences but (and a big but this is) it is now kept to a minimum.

Also, while there were major name changes in GW like Khushrenada to Coastlander and White Fang to White Tango, they took care in using the original names this time. True, Garrod they call "Garodo" and Tiffa is "Tepa" but these are minor pronunciation differences. It's forgivable.

Of course with a better sounding script, the story is easier to understand. (Something which doesn't apply to the locally dubbed GW.) In a final, desperate attempt, colonies are dropped on Earth (kaboom!) reducing it to a near barren wasteland where people use any means, including mobile suits, to have one up over the next person. Good thing then that there are guys like Garodo, er, Garrod who have enough zeal to take on anybody. He quickly disposes of a go-gooder and divests him of a mobile suit. This does not go unnoticed. His services are enlisted by a questionable old dude who wants him to go get some girl. En route, he comes upon a glue gun-looking thug which turns out to be the controller for the Gundam X. Armed with this powerful mech, Garrod easily makes minced meat out of a couple of round headed robot thingies and funny-faced Gundams. That is, until he is accosted by Gundam Shockwave and Gundam Starscream but this only serves as an opportunity for the Gundam X to show all its potential. (Did you get all that? Well, I told you I wasn't much of a Gundam fan.)

The story is easy enough to follow but maybe because it's all kinda similar to what we've seen before. The scarred brooding guy seems like another Zechs, Tiffa is a less annoying Relena and Garrod is a cross between Heero and Duo. Even its major drawing point — the mechs (didn't — are kinda familiar. There's one that can extend its arms like the Shenlong and one with powerful Gatling guns like Heavy Arms.

Same old? Same old? Maybe not. I'm sure the series has its own charm, I just haven't spotted it yet. Of course, I'm willing to stick it out and find out just what it is. And there lies a potential saving grace.



EXCLUSIVE: FINAL FANTASY NEWS



This is the dream I have everynight

by Igor Cabbab

Move over Rinoa Heartilly, Doctor Aki Ross is in town! If you were disappointed with how the Rock looked as the monstrous CG Scorpion King towards the end of *The Mummy Returns*, you certainly won't be disappointed with *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* (we're not just talking about *Max Steel* here, this is the real deal). We were fortunate enough to exclusively view the trailer and some choice scenes from the movie courtesy of *Columbia Pictures*. As gracious hosts, they provided us with food (hamburgers and sodas...two of the main food groups for writers and artists alike together with pizza and Chinese take-out). All of us were unwrapping our burger buns, sipping our softdrinks and making crumpling noises (hey, no one can eat burgers silently) when the first scene was shown. What can I say...There was a stunned silence. The burgers were all left half-eaten and we were stupefied! And I do mean STUPEFIED! Our mouths were left wide open the moment Doctor Aki Ross stepped out of her ship and onto the desolate place once known as Earth. Omigod! She looked real! Okay, she may not look as beautiful as Rinoa but she looks more real than the *Final Fantasy VIII* heroine (as far as I was concerned, she looked like a cross between Rinoa and **Sandra Bullock**). Jeez! The skin and every single strand of hair looked oh so real! Not like the porcelain-looking, subtle skin Rinoa had. She landed on the area without authorization to look for Spirits. Along comes Captain Grey and his crew to get her outta there and as far away from the clutches of the (menacing) Phantoms as fast as Final Fantastically possible in **John Woo** or *Matrix* fashion. Okay, he may not look as handsome as Squall but he looks more real than the *Final Fantasy VIII* hero (as far as we were concerned he looked suspiciously like **Ben Affleck**). SHEESH! BITIN! I may not be a fan of the RPG console game but I really can't wait to see how the movie turns out. Piece of advice: THIS IS ONE MOVIE YOU SHOULDN'T MISS!



Fire in the Hole!

by Maria Verona C. Elonaga

There were six of us privileged enough to be invited to an exclusive preview slash teaser of *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* by the gracious people at *Columbia Pictures*. Though most of us are animation and game fans, by the end of the trailer, I can safely say that even the non-fans were simply...stupefied!

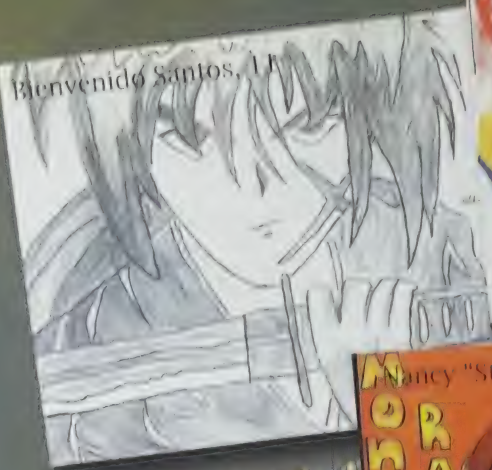
I'm not much of a techie person but I think those geniuses at *Square* took CG animation still one step further. Geez, such details! If you think the characters on the posters are life-like already, you should see them moving! You can see individual strands of hair flowing, you can see the ridges on lips, blemishes on skin like freckles, liver spots and uneven skin tones and you can discern the scraggly hairs on beards and five o'clock shadows on the male characters.

When I first heard of the movie a few years back, I was a bit skeptical, especially after I learned that they weren't going to use any of the characters or storylines from the any of the games. But now...geez, to say that the trailer changed my mind would be a gross understatement. A little bit more and it would've made me drool. Eye-popping, adrenaline-pumping, throw in every bit of worn out cliché they use to describe stunning visuals, it would apply to this movie. Plus it boasts of a good cast of voice actors to boot: **Ming Na**, **Alec Baldwin**, **Ving Rhames** and **James Woods** to name a few.

However, I can't help but think of the saying "the best parts of the movie are in the trailer". If that's true then I've seen all that one has to see in *Final Fantasy* the movie. So for my sake, and the sake of a lot of fans out there, I hope that this time, the old saying doesn't hold true. Though I may end up eating my words in the future, I'll venture this: IF the movie is going to live up to its hype.



Benvenido Santos, 18



Sheruby Padernal, 16



April Angeles, 15



Nancy "Stupid Lee", 12



Carina Leonore Ng, 15



Kartia



Katherine S. Eustaquio

Johan S. Ocampo



Anonymous



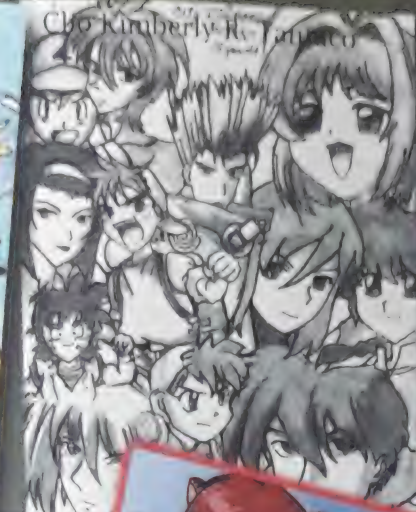
Johanne



ine Santos, 10



Cho Kimberly R. Tamarco



Freddie Jay Tabayan Jr.



Sailor Moon



n Santos, 13

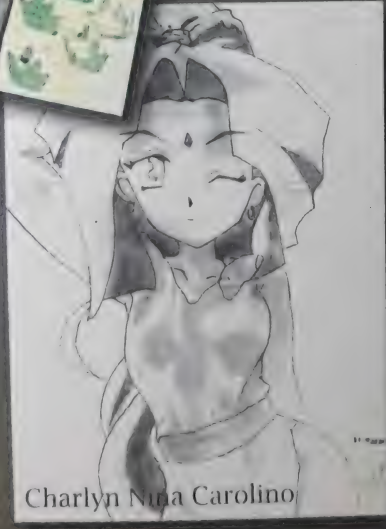


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11



ras, 15



Charlyn Nina Carolino

We here at **Questor** know how to appreciate talent. So get those creative juices flowing and show us your stuff. We encourage every fanboy and fangirl to send in their artwork (originals, don't trace over somebody else's drawings!) to **Doujin Drawing Board** c/o **Questor Magazine**, 206 Quadstar Bldg., Ortigas Ave., Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila.

Your masterpieces should be no larger than 8 1/2" by 11". You can use pencils, crayons, markers, pen and ink, whatever works for you. As much as possible, try not to fold your artwork. Those folds give us a hard time, you know.

Those who want their works returned to them, should send us a self-addressed stamped envelope with their entries. Oh, we can't process any entries sent via email at this time.

The best part is if you're good enough (or lucky enough), you'll be the **Questor** Girl of the month and we'll GIVE YOU A PRIZE!



From reader Sherris Alix
kaoruhimura@edsamail.com.ph

Q: Alam nyo ba ang name ng anak ni Kaoru at Kenshin?

A: Oo, Kenji. (Trivia: Kenji literally means "way of the sword", as opposed to Kenshin which means "heart of sword".)

Q: Anong name ng anak ni Miaka at Tamahome?

A: Tamakana. Just kidding. As far as we know, they don't have any kids...yet. (Trivia: Ang fave font nila ay tahoma.)

Q: Bakit naghiwalay si Kaji and Misato?

A: Dahil patay na si Kaji.

Q: Paano namatay si Tomoe?

A: Nasaksak siya ni Kenshin.

Q: Anong nangyari kay Shinji at Asuka sa ending ng Eva the movie?

A: Nabuhay sila.

Q: May part two ba ang FY o sa manga lang to?

A: It has two OAV series as "sequels".

Q: Anong name nung gf ni Kamui sa X?

A: Fuma. Este, Kotori pala.

From reader Ivan Emnace
of Sta. Mesa, Manila

Q: What is the meaning of OAV?

A: Original Animation Video, anime that goes straight to video and not shown first on TV nor movie theaters.

Q: What is *henta*?

A: Something not intended for you good kiddies. ^_^

It's an anime genre which deals with all types of sexual perversions, preferences and fetishes.

Q: What is the difference between anime and cartoons?

A: Spelling.





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Ohayo! How's school so far? Same rules apply boyz and gurlz, we had to snip some of 'em up to make way for others. Thanx also to all the others who wrote us like Amanda, Lime, Kaye, certified otaku of Cavite Yume-san, Rohannie, Hime Lao, Kuichiro Karen, Ayen, Moralinda, Shienna Marie, Marien, Noemi and a whole lot of others.

Questor Kenshin

Yay! The May issue is finally out and I have to say that it's the best issue ever!!! Thank you so much for featuring **Rurouni Kenshin!** ^_~x I have to agree with what you said that it's the best manga. It's really too bad Sony didn't animate the Revenge arc. =< I'd like to comment on what Ms. Bambi said though. The OAV is not better than the TV series. They are equal in beauty (?) though in different ways. The 2 depict the 2 sides of Kenshin. The type of animation of the OAV wouldn't suit the TV series, and vice versa (ack! can you imagine Tomoe getting bug-eyed all of a sudden? Not a pretty picture). Keep up the good work on the mag. ^_~x

Yours truly,
Umi Ryuzaki

AAHHH!!! HENTAI! What the hell is Ryo's Right hand doing on top of Yuri's chest in your Accessing Memory Card article. I don't even wanna think about what his other hand is going for. And they're supposed to be siblings, too. Very funny however, even if unintentional. Thank you for the new magazine with all the Kenshin Material. The articles on weaponry would help big time with this new story I'm cooking up, Some comments on changes made. It's good you've decided to package goodies other than posters. I agree with some of your letter writers, those old comics of **Voltes V** are retread. Thank you for getting rid of them in this issue. I bought your magazine for the articles not the pictures, so the sheer number of articles is also a welcome change. I feel like I'm getting my money's worth.

Kirby C Go
byriak@edsamail.com.ph

Questor WINS!

I want to say "Thank you so much" for featuring **Evangelion**, you kept your promise. I saw you on TV at the cable channel WINS, Friday night of April 20. You were interviewed regarding **Questor Magazine**, right? Sino ba yung naka T-shirt ng **Fushigi Yugi**? I think she's Takako Takimoto

Sarah Navarro
blue_reiayanami@yahoo.com

P.S. I know how old is Igor now ^_~

Correct on that one. By the way, I lied about my age, I'm 18. ^_~

I saw Bambi and Igor at WINS promoting Questor! COOL!
A Philippine mag about Japanese anime on Japanese TV.
WAY COOL!!!!!!

Jose Claveria
nightmare_02@hotmail.com

Great going guys! You've just shown the world how we Pinoys can produce an anime mag like this! Yehey!!

Purple Schezar
purplearies@weareanime.com

P.S. Igor looked kinda' nervous on TV.

I do? Jeez, I should cut down on the coffee then.

Questor Smells

Konnichiwa! Hmm...Bakit ang bango-bango ng pages ng magazine nyo pag bagong bili?! Your mag not only looks and sounds great, it also smells great! Please, sana paki-post ng email ko dahil I'm so lonely! Arigato, Gambatte!

Hoshikara
hoshikara@yahoo.com

Uh, you know why each issue smells great? We rub each and every issue over our ceramic bodies before sealing them in plastic. ^_~

Questor Numbers

What phone number did Keiichi dial to contact the Goddess Hotline (Helpline) and Belldandy? I want to know the real one not all those DELIVERY NUMBERS!!!

Analyn C Yae
ayae@edsamail.com.ph

Uh, did you ask any of them about their "Belldandy Specials"? You really have to say those words to get in touch with her.

Questor International

Finally I can buy Questor mag here at Iloilo! Kaya pala I have this urge yesterday to visit all the magazine stands at SM City. I was looking around the store and got tired and wanted to go home but suddenly my eyes caught a glimpse of that "Q"! Takbo si ako dun and there I found Questor!!! Nasa sulok kasi e, kaya hindi ko agad nakita

merline
merline2k@yahoo.com

Thanks for being so QUESTORRIFIC with regards to your fantastic anime articles. Thanks at ang QUESTOR ay ipinanganak bilang instrumento para manatiling nag-iinit at nagliliyab ang aming maka-anime na damdamin. Saludo kami sa inyong magasin na nagbibigay buhay sa aming mga pusong maka-anime. Thanks.

THE ANIME FANATIC COUSINS,
Janice Dizon & Michaela Mallari,
Malino, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

I just want to tell you guys that since the February issue, I can already get my copy of Questor here in Batangas! We have a SkyBucks store near our house that sells anime merchandise and cards. They sell Questor there now and I'm very happy about it. I wrote to you guys before about not having Questor in Batangas but now I have no com-

plaints! All your issues have been great! Thanks for including a *sentai/tokusatsu* article in your last issue.

Aileen/ ^Ayukawa^
Lipa, Batangas
Leen_dcpeda@hotmail.com

Konichiwa...wa..wa..! Your mag is doin great. It really turns me on. *Muchas gracias* for selecting my drawing in your February issue as "Questor Cool Pick", *naiiyak nga ako, eh, sniff. Sa inyong mga staff yo te amo, ang galing-galing nyo talaga. Sayonara, ciao lieblings. Anime rules! Hasta la proxima vez.*

JC "Marron" Mendoza
San Pablo City, Laguna

Wow! Four languages this time around. ^_^

More Fushigi

To Ms. Bambi Eloriaga

You are the one who said it first that we have the right to express ourselves; I don't like the fact that you write the DAIKIRAI FUSHIGI YUUGI article. What if I say DAIKIRAI BAMBI-SAN!? You should have said that I'M NOT A FUSHIGI YUUGI FAN! Many were hurt upon reading the article. That anime was a shoujo's favorite anime.

elhazard
illusion@elhazard.net

Both writers and readers have a freedom to voice out their thoughts about certain types of anime, but nevertheless they should still respect those who have different opinions. If every otaku in this world liked and hated the same thing, then people would have less of a chance to articulate themselves. Now that would be boring, wouldn't it? =)

Bella-san
bella@scribble.nu

I read people's opinions. Some were criticizing and saying bad things about you, what you write and your works. Hello!?! If it weren't for the writers, the mag won't exist. Hope that the people won't be stubborn. Yeah, I know that this is a liberated country and everybody's free to express his or her opinions. It's still better to criticize an anime character than real people so my only comment is that I hate MIAKA! Well, more power to the mag! ARIGATO!

hannah
hannah_anime@yahoo.com

Let me start with that Daikirai Fushigi Yugi article, I love FY, but I liked that article. It's nice to know the weaknesses of a great anime that could only be seen by those who hate it.

Nagi's Shoji
The4thram@yahoo.com

Questor Stuff

I so really want to say: I LOVE YOU! I LOVE YOU! I LOVE YOU! Can I make another request? Can I get to kiss you too? Really, pretty please! ONEGAI!

The Top 10 Worst Anime Pick Up Lines really got me saying EWWW!!! EWWW!!! EWWW!!! Nakakatinding

balahibo talaga! Another favorite article is the Chain Mail. Ha! Ha! Ha! Wow, ha! Ala-EDSA 3 anime style! Mga Anti-FY at Pro-FY. Watashi Tachi article. What can I say? John Michael T. Lu. HEESH SHO CUTE!!!! I love the Hitokiri Hentai Harakiri. Yihee! SHO CUTE AGAIN! His cat character is so adorable! I'm beginning to think, is he really this huggable? ^_^

Lastly, what does Henshucho mean? Bambi-sama, ok lang yun! I agree with you that everyone has a right to air their feelings. It's the passion that counts. *Atapang atao ka talaga!*

Aish a.k.a. Yoji -chan ^_^

Glad to hear that you liked the anime pick-up lines. Yes, John Michael is really that huggable in real life. Besides, he really looks like a cat. Henshucho means "editor-in-chief". And no, you can't kiss us. You can kiss John Michael. ^_^

- Good work on the Evangelion article. Best article I've ever read.

- Kawaii "fun in the sun" pics. Oohlala!

- You're kidding abt. Trowa using egg yolks on his hair right? I mean wouldn't that smell? So I guess Hiei is using it too huh? Maybe they're using like the one Cameron Diaz used in the movie *There's Something About Mary*. Just a thought.

Michelle Ancaja
michelle@nakago.zzn.com

Dearest Igor,

Hi! May the sweetest smile flash on your face upon reading this letter. Believe me, it's the first time that I've seen your imposing magazine and I am afraid I'll be an addict sooner or later that I'll have to save my BAON.

Angelica M. Cangao
Lopez, Quezon

Awww, how sweet. We're all smiling now. Hope you enjoyed this month's issue of the Q. I'm not much of a cat person, I'm more of a dog guy. Actually ran over (unintentionally) one of those felines along the South Superhighway, 'twas a choice between running over the critter or stomping on the brakes and starting a 15-car pile up. Well, that's all for this issue folks. Till next time.

Igor Cabbab
Managing Editor

Send in your comments to:

Chain Mail

Questor Magazine

206 Quadstar Bldg., 80 Ortigas Ave.

San Juan, Metro Manila

Fax: 721 6974

e-mail:questor@broline.com



by Igor Cabbab and Bambi Eloriaga

Jennyson Rosero

Graphic Artist

We settled down to our meal, resting our legs beneath the *chabudai* in a secluded room at a generic Japanese restaurant where this exclusive interview was conducted. The sukiyaki was too salty but it allowed us to pass the time as we waited for the man with the magic fingers to arrive.

Finally, we espied his lithe silhouette sauntering behind the paper walls. He parts the Japanese sliding doors effortlessly, like how **Antonio Banderas** finger-combed his hair in *Desperado*, with a grace that can only come from years of parading and dancing as a Mocchi mascot.

He settles down opposite from us, his hair bouncing from the motion. Jennyson Rosero, painter *par excellence*, touted as the next National Artist. He hit the scene like a typhoon in August and shocked the world with his smashing ideas, crisp lines and innovative neon color schemes.

"What is your reaction when they say that you will be the next National Artist?" we asked. "Ano, actually mej nakaka-flatter. Isipin mo, ihanay ka sa mga katulad nina Amorsolo, Bencab at Malang. Ayos! Nakakapang-kumbaba naman." (National Artist? I don't give a damn. All I know is that I'm better than all of them combined! Heck, I could paint anything with one arm tied behind my back and wearing nothing but girls' panties.)

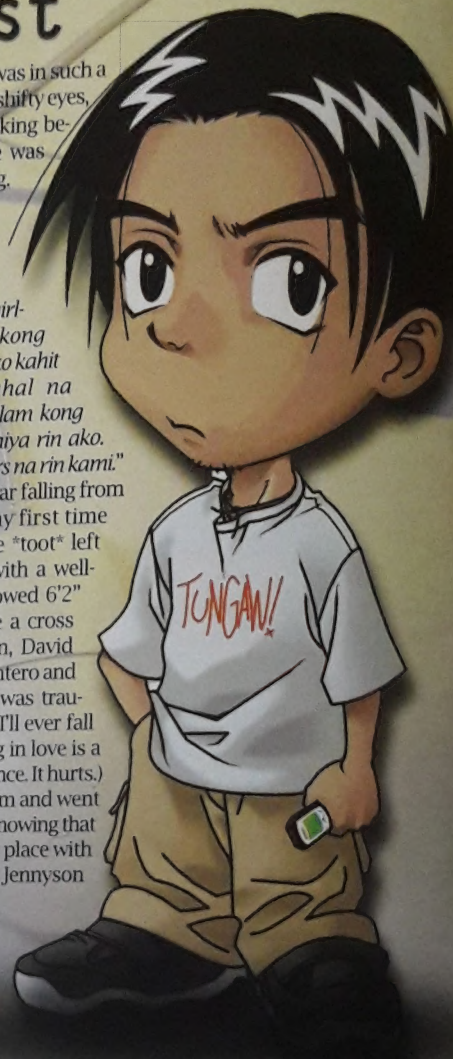
How does he describe his artistic technique? "Artistic technique? *Antagal ko ring pinag-aralan yan. Andaming oras rin ang ginugol ko sa color theory, perspective at vanishing point studies. Sounds exaj pero pinaka inspiration ko ang mommy ko, ang girlfriend ko at si Lord.*" (Hah! All I do is spread oil paint on the canvass and walk all over it. Then I pass it off as abstract art. Once I just covered myself in acrylic and rolled my naked body all over the canvass. Not only was it fun, it was also ohhh so very sensual! I don't bother with stuff like color theory, perspective and vanishing points. Girls' panties are my main inspiration.)

We then noticed him thumbing away at his new *Nokia 6210* and asked him about it. "Actually proud ako dito sa telepono ko. Ang tagal ko ring pinag-ipunan ito. Pinampalit ko sya dun sa dating 3310 ko na pinagsawaan ko na. Jologs na rin kasi yung fone na ganun. May changeable font size na sya, personalized folders at iba pa. Katas yan ng hirap at pawis ko. Kaya I'm a happy and satisfied tungaw right now" (Actually I'm very proud of this phone. I got it at a bargain water damaged sale at Virra Mall during the height of the fire last May 5. They were selling it at PhP500.00 each so I grabbed the chance. Funny thing though, the one

who sold it to me was in such a hurry. He also had shifty eyes, he was always looking behind him as if he was afraid of something. I wonder why.)

How is his lovelife at this point in time? "Suwerte ako sa girlfriend ko. Alam kong love na love niya ako kahit sukebe ako. Mahal na mahal ko sya at alam kong mahal na mahal niya rin ako. One and a half years na rin kami." He replied with a tear falling from his eye. (Actually, my first time was a tragedy. The "toot" left me and took off with a well-built and well-endowed 6'2" guy who looks like a cross between Dean Cain, David Bunevacz, Troy Montero and David Boreanaz. It was traumatic. I don't think I'll ever fall in love again. Falling in love is a very painful experience. It hurts.)

We thanked him and went our separate ways, knowing that the world is a better place with honest people like Jennyson around.



The Whole Kit and Caboodle

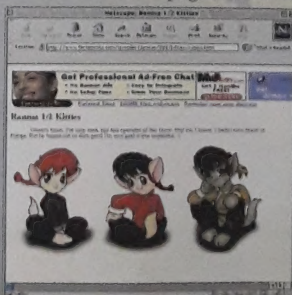
by Tsun Li



I'm not very fond of cats. Ever since one bit me and managed to crack a fingernail in half (That was really painful, believe me), I've regarded felines with a wary eye. I must admit, though, that they have got to be the most graceful animals on Earth. And I still think the wee beasties can be pretty darn cute (the non-fingernail biting ones, at least).

So for this assignment, I decided to settle for ones that were less ornery — and preferably more two-dimensional — than the one I tangled with as a kid. That's how I came upon the **Anime Kitty Adoption Center** (<http://www.angelfire.com/anime/artz/adoptions.html>).

This website is chockfull of feline versions of your favorite anime characters. Think of Boy-king Van Fanel as a cat! Pyromaniac Dilandau Albatou as a cat! Aya/Ran Fujimiyu as a cat! ...you get the picture. The adoption center has a nice selection of cats sorted by series, although the collection is not too extensive. All you have to do is pick out the one you want and download it into your hard drive.



Unlike other adoption sites, the Anime Kitty Adoption Center doesn't require you to sign up or to have a homepage. In fact, the owner encourages surfers to copy, print, post or whatever, just make sure that when you do use any of the graphics on your site, you acknowledge the center.

Another plus is that you can request for a kitty-fied character of your own, as long as there isn't already one in their archives. This may take some time, in as much as the staff of artists seems to be pretty busy and have a backlog of requests.

The artwork, however, may not be to everyone's liking. The rendering of images can be sometimes crude and the color schemes at times falls flat and appears to be limited to a certain range of hues and effects. But still, where else are you going to see the entire gang of *Gundam Wing* as cats?

The site itself could use an overhaul. There is no unified theme and the pages look as if they were put together haphazardly. Readability is another thing. The lime green text on black is a great strain for anyone with bad eyesight. Not a good use of a dark background, especially when it comes to the links. These are barely discernible and you practically have to go nose-to-screen just to tell where the heck they are.

All in all, the Anime Kitty Adoption Center has a good premise. It just needs to follow through with a clearer layout and a better design.

Meanwhile, I think I'll stick with my pet turtle.

Tsun Li is adopted.

gokiburiphobia /n. an intense, irrational fear
of cockroaches.



**Beware
of the
infestation!**

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